

GLOBAL HEALTH INVESTIGATIONS



2020

THE BUREAU
OF INVESTIGATIVE
JOURNALISM

Stories that Matter

The Bureau: Journalism that drives change

Through investigative journalism we expose systemic failings and wrongdoing to help people better understand our world.

With no corporate or political agenda, we uncover corruption, corporate incompetence and government failure, abuses of power and the human impact of injustice.

We reveal how issues harm societies and corrode democracy at every level - locally, nationally and globally.



We focus where our approach can make a difference in five main areas - environment, health, finance, big tech and UK issues (including local councils, housing and job security).

Our journalism is a crucial part of the change process - uncovering new evidence, engaging widespread public attention and demanding accountability.

This review looks back at the investigations and impact from our Global Health team in 2020.

Systemic issues in global healthcare are a matter of life and death

We all deserve global health systems that are more transparent, more resilient and more equitable.

But corruption and profiteering in the medical industries; incompetence and bad practice by governments; and drastic health inequalities are barriers to change and need urgent scrutiny.

Our investigations reveal where changes could reduce suffering and save lives, how that change could happen and who could drive it.



This year we launched a new global health team to work with communities and journalists around the world to uncover new evidence and tell unheard stories.

Our findings have reached millions of readers through partnerships with major global and national news outlets, websites and newsletters.

An EU inquiry, new multimillion dollar commitments in overseas medical aid and changes to corporate policy are just some of the ways our reporting has helped drive real world change.



Crisis at the Commission

Inside Europe's response to the coronavirus outbreak

July 2020

By Ben Stockton, Céline Schoen, Laura Margottini

[Read the full story](#)

An independent inquiry was launched by the EU ombudsman

after our findings revealed confusion, complacency and a lack of coordination in Europe's response to coronavirus. Our reporting was published with major outlets in 15 countries and 6 languages, with particularly strong coverage in Germany.

The EU Health Commissioner, who was initially very defensive when questioned by our reporter in a press conference post-

publication, changed her stance 24 hours later when she issued a statement saying the Commission has lessons to learn and needs 'to start the reflection on what we have learnt and what needs to be handled better, differently in the future.'

She stated that stronger EU agencies and a stronger framework were needed for future crisis response.

The Bureau brings underreported issues to the front pages.

But we couldn't ignore one of the biggest health stories of our time.

Lack of oxygen leaves patients in Africa gasping for air

August 2020

By Madlen Davies, Sam Mednick,
Angela Onwuzoo

[Read the full story](#)

In August, we revealed how patients are dying from a lack of oxygen across sub-Saharan Africa due to the business practices and high prices charged by the two European gas companies that dominate the market there.



Our investigation sparked a critical conversation around oxygen as an “essential medicine”.

In addition to appearing on BBC World’s Newsday, we co-published with Punch Nigeria, Quartz Africa, Kenya’s Daily Nation and the Guardian.

We also connected with organisations working on access to oxygen in Africa. Our press coverage reached corporate investors, and campaigners are

using detailed evidence uncovered through our investigations to get the key gas providers to make concessions around oxygen supply.

Following our reporting, the African Mission Healthcare announced a new \$1m campaign to build sustainable oxygen sources across the region.

USAID pledged \$18 million for emergency oxygen supplies to fight Covid-19 to 11 countries including Kenya.

We don’t cover daily news.

We uncover stories that have relevance today and can help drive change tomorrow.



The baby brands turning Indonesian instagram into free formula milk ads

July 2020

By Rosa Furneaux

[Read the full story](#)

This year we exposed how multinational baby formula



companies, such as Nestlé and Danone, may be violating World Health Organization (WHO) guidelines.

Our investigation raised serious concerns about how some companies are using social media to market to consumers in South-east Asia.

We published with Daily Beast, ran a Q&A with UK parenting portal Mumsnet and reached specialists through newsletters.

We collaborated with an Indonesian impact producer to reach mothers affected by the advertising.

The story appeared on parenting websites and forums translated into Bahasa Indonesia, and was co-published with leading Indonesian investigative magazine Tempo.

We have built relationships with international NGOs working on breastfeeding and children's health, which has continued the dialogue post-publication.

The NGOs are keen to be able to identify potential violations of the WHO code themselves and we supported them by running a workshop for more than 50 organisations in the Global Breastfeeding Collective to equip them with the tools they need.

By revealing vested interests and shining a light on bad practice, we want to build fairer systems around the world.

The Secrets of Big Tobacco

Reporting by Matthew Chapman, Madlen Davies, Ben Stockton, Tamasin Cave

[Read the stories](#)

We found compelling evidence that Philip Morris International's global campaign to "Unsmoke the World" – the company's vision to end global smoking – is a marketing drive for their new range of cigarette alternatives and an attempt to rehabilitate the company's image.

After findings from our investigation went out with Channel 4 Dispatches, PMI tweeted a response to footage showing its cigarettes advertised prominently just steps away from school gates in Indonesia.



They claim to have taken the advertising down and to be looking into having "the right compliance systems in place in Indonesia to prevent a recurrence".

In response to revelations in our story, the UK government reaffirmed its commitment to protecting public health from the vested interests of tobacco companies.

Leaked documents had shown that PMI had been attempting to buy government influence.

Our reporting also exposed how PMI has taken advantage of the UK's ban on menthol cigarettes to promote its new tobacco product, despite heavy restrictions on advertising tobacco.

This collaboration ran with ten partners in ten countries (Japan, Ukraine, Romania, Italy, UK, Macedonia, Mexico, Colombia, Guatemala and Dominican Republic).

Accountability matters.

We're keeping a close eye on Big Tobacco claims and strategies.

Imprisoned under the cover of Covid

November 2020

By Madlen Davies

[Read the full story](#)

In April, news reports emerged of a Ugandan legal aid organisation battling to get 20 people from an LGBTQ+ homeless shelter out of jail.

The shelter had been raided by police and Hajji Kiyimba, the local mayor. The residents were arrested under a new presidential directive which banned groups of five from meeting outside. Their Human Rights Awareness and Promotion Forum lawyers said these charges were unfounded as the rules did not apply to people inside their homes.

They believe the raid was motivated by homophobia and



officials were using new Covid-19 laws to target marginalised groups.

Kiyimba, who is now running to be an MP in Uganda, is accused of beating some of the men during the raid.

He allegedly organised for journalists to come and film them, outing them publicly in a country where same-sex relations are punishable by years in prison.

Others were subjected to anal examinations. The residents were tied together with ropes and marched to the police station while a crowd hit them and threw stones.

They were sent to jail, where they claim they were brutally beaten and tortured for being gay. For most of their incarceration they were denied access to their lawyers.

Our story describes what happened in their words.

It shouldn't be a crime to be yourself.

Our investigations challenge those who abuse their power.

Mapping discrimination

November 2020

By Rosa Furneaux

[Read the full story](#)

From Latin America to the Caribbean to Africa, we found that discrimination towards LGBTQ+ people is rife under Covid-19. So we started mapping incidents across the globe.

As well as facing hostility from local communities, LGBTQ+ people have suffered under new legislation and police have used new powers as a pretext for targeting and persecution.



Health Justice Hub

If our journalism is going to be truly impactful, we need to involve communities of experience and expertise from the start of our reporting.

Together we can surface new ideas, discover unreported problems and shift coverage toward more critical areas.

Across 2021, we'll be bringing together 12 health justice ambassadors and advocates from different backgrounds, locations and experiences to help inform and deepen the impact of our health justice investigations.

Public interest journalism enables people to take actions that are more informed and insightful.

2020 partners

DAILY BEAST

QUARTZ

il Fatto Quotidiano.it

DIE WELT

theguardian

Süddeutsche Zeitung

The Daily Telegraph

Mail & Guardian

Sci Dev Net

Daily Mail

Our team

Our new global health team launched in April, against the challenging backdrop of the coronavirus pandemic.

The team has worked collaboratively with journalists around the world to report on a range of investigations - you can explore them all on our [website](#).



Laura Margottini, Freelance Reporter



Madlen Davies, Chief Global Health Correspondent



Matthew Chapman, Big Tobacco Reporter



Ben du Preez, Impact Producer and Community Organiser



Rosa Furneaux, Global Health Reporter



Ben Stockton, Reporter



Tamasin Cave, Freelance Reporter



Chrissie Giles, Global Health Editor

Your support made this possible - thank you!

Adessium Foundation
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The Bill & Melinda Gates Foundation
theguardian.org
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Joseph Rowntree Charitable Trust
Lankelly Chase
J Leon Charitable Fund
Luminate
Open Society Foundations
Paul Hamlyn Foundation
Pears Foundation
David & Elaine Potter Foundation
Reva and David Logan Foundation
Rudolf Augstein Stiftung
Vital Strategies
Wellcome

We're so grateful to the growing community of committed foundations and hundreds of readers like you who supported our work this year.

Investigative journalism isn't a quick fix.

It takes time to uncover the evidence and it takes time to get people to notice. But when we take that time, we can get results.

Join the fight for a fairer society

There couldn't be a more important time than now - as the pandemic has laid bare so many underlying causes of health inequality - to support investigative journalism that drives change.

**Click here to support the
Bureau with a monthly
donation today**

Yes! I'll help

thebureauinvestigates.com/support-us