

Global Reporting  
Centre

GLOBALREPORTINGCENTRE.ORG

# GLRC

2023/2024  
Year in review



THE UNIVERSITY OF BRITISH COLUMBIA  
School of Journalism, Writing, and Media

JWAM.UBC.CA

*As journalists, we try not to bury the lede.*

These are challenging times when it comes to global reporting. When we launched the GRC in 2016, funding prospects were already dwindling. Today it's even worse. And it's part of broader cuts to the industry that we've been saddened to see. Incredible journalists are losing their jobs and entire newsrooms are shuttering.

Still, we keep doing this work because it's too important not to. In face of multiple crises, including threats to democracy, worsening climate instability, and global conflicts, these stories must continue to be told.

We believe the best way of doing so is through collaboration. We've developed strong partnerships with journalists, media organizations, and researchers from around the world. We also benefit deeply from our position at the University of British Columbia's School of Journalism, Writing, and Media – this gives us the freedom to research, innovate, experiment, and build expertise. It's an environment that lets us be forward-thinking, both in terms of seeking solutions and in mentoring a new generation of global journalists.

Our work is funded by grants and donations. It's your generosity that makes what we do possible, and we thank you for your continued support.

Andie Crossan  
Executive Director



Britney Dennison  
Executive Editor



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Tonle Sap Lake, Cambodia. Taken during production of the Global Reporting Program's project on rice farming. THOMAS CRISTOFOLETTI



## A word from our chair

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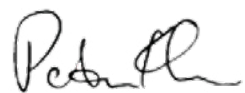
We started the Global Reporting Centre a decade ago to fill a growing gap in the media landscape for deeply reported international stories. The Centre has evolved into an incubator of innovation in global journalism – from fostering grassroots collaborations between reporters around the world, to bringing subject-area experts into the newsroom as partners. The Centre also experiments with new forms of reporting that empowers marginalized communities to tell and own their own stories.

With the help of our board, and the incredibly dedicated staff at the Centre, we have grown the GRC into a world-class organization that is getting notice. The University of British Columbia, and the journalism program in particular, have given the GRC a nurturing home. A diverse set of funders – from individual philanthropists to foundations to academic agencies – have supported the Centre through the years.

The independent media landscape has been growing and evolving, and we need to grow and evolve with it. While challenging, this also provides us an opportunity for reinvention and renewal. Within the crowded and competitive journalism community, the GRC continues to stand out as a beacon of innovation.

As a journalism organization based at a tier-one university, we have a responsibility and an opportunity to lean into advancing global journalism practice – through research, teaching, and experimentation. I have confidence that the GRC will continue to live up to this promise.

Peter Klein  
Founder and Chair of the Board




## Meet our leadership team

**Andie Crossan** is the Executive Director of the Global Reporting Centre and an Assistant Professor at the School of Journalism, Writing, and Media at UBC. She is a veteran radio journalist with over 30 years of experience. She's reported from over 20 countries and has been based in the U.S. and the U.K. Andie has worked for the BBC World Service, CBC News, Associated Press, and NBC News. As a radio journalist, she's produced and reported stories on gender rights around the globe, including from Afghanistan, Bangladesh, Uganda, Ukraine, South Africa, Pakistan, India, Brazil, and Kenya. Crossan also produced extensive coverage of immigration issues from the U.S. border and Mexico.

Andie is the winner of two RTDNA Edward R. Murrow awards for news documentaries and she led a national newsroom in the U.S. to win a number of awards including the RTDNA Kaleidoscope and Gracie awards. Andie was also part of the RTDNA award-winning team that produced the CBC Vancouver Land Back podcast, and a 2022/2023 Asper Visiting Professor at UBC where she co-taught the Global Reporting Program. Andie grew up in North Vancouver and is a proud member of the Tsleil-Waututh Nation.

**Britney Dennison** is the Executive Editor of the Global Reporting Centre. She has been with the School of Journalism, Writing, and Media since 2014, and with the GRC, first as the Deputy Director and then as the Managing Editor, since its inception in 2016. Her work has won several awards including five Edward R. Murrow awards, an Online Journalism award, and a Canadian Association of Journalists award.

Her work has appeared in major media outlets, including NBC News, PBS NewsHour, Mother Jones, the PBS series FRONTLINE, the Toronto Star and more. Britney is also an instructor for the Global Reporting Program at the School of Journalism, Writing, and Media at UBC where she has led student fieldwork in a number of countries, including Cambodia, Peru, Norway, and France. Her work focuses on multimedia journalism, including video production, digital design, photography, and feature writing. Britney's work also specializes in community-engaged reporting. She produced the award-winning video series, Turning Points, for PBS NewsHour, which piloted the Centre's new approach to reporting called 'empowerment journalism.'

Britney holds a Master of Journalism degree from UBC and a Bachelor of Arts in visual arts and English, language, and literature.



# A more equitable approach to global journalism

*“Global journalism, done differently” is not just our tagline. It underscores every facet of our work. It all starts with an approach we call empowerment journalism, one that focuses on collaboration and equity.*

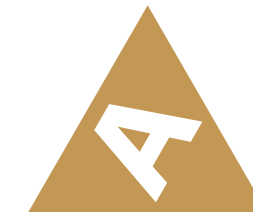


Filming near Yellowknife, NWT, for the Turning Points project.

BRITNEY DENNISON

This year we took what we’ve learned from our work on the empowerment approach, and insights from 21 award-winning filmmakers, newsroom leaders, editors, community reporters, and authors, and put it all into a guide.

The [empowerment journalism media guide](#) provides advice, tips, and best practices for producing community-engaged reporting.



We are proud to have been recognized for this work with a [Gold Anthem Award](#) in the category of Diversity, Equity, and Inclusion in Education for a Literacy Program or Platform.

***“Journalists bear a huge responsibility when they are reporting on a story about a community that is not theirs. This guide is a great starting place to understand how to work in collaboration with local journalists and sources in a respectful way.”***

YUKARI KANE, CO-FOUNDER AND CEO OF THE PRISON JOURNALISM PROJECT

***“As we build new models for production of documentary films, we also need to create new resources to reflect these changes. I hope the Empowerment Journalism Media Guide is able to help pave the way for new ways of relating to the communities we work in.”***

ALEX PRITZ, DOCUMENTARY FILMMAKER, DIRECTOR OF THE TERRITORY



A key component of the empowerment approach is working in partnership with local journalists. This dovetails with our longstanding work researching the traditional foreign correspondent-fixer relationship. It's one that often comes with challenges related to crediting, pay, editorial agency, and safety. Through our work, which included a global survey of 450 industry professionals in more than 70 countries, several published articles, including a peer-reviewed journal article and industry publications, and a two-day intensive workshop with 35 international journalists, fixers, and editors, we published [recommendations for working with local journalists/fixers](#).

The guide was added to the James W. Foley Legacy Foundation's Journalism Safety modules, which are shared with newsrooms and journalism schools. It was also widely shared, including by The Dart Center for Journalism and Trauma and in the October 2023 issue of the UN Plan of Action on the Safety of Journalists.

*"I'm very proud to have been part of this important process by the Global Reporting Centre towards creating a guide on how to work with foreign journalists in an equitable manner."*

PRIYANKA BORPUJARIM, JOURNALIST

At the GRC, it is our intention to infuse all our future reporting with elements of empowerment journalism. We are embracing the empowerment model in the production of a podcast series we are currently working on that chronicles the experiences of people who were evicted in the lead-up to the Olympics. We are collaborating with local community leaders and those with lived experience in Vancouver, Los Angeles, and Paris as part of our upcoming podcast [State of Play](#).

## Sticking with the story

# 02

*News can be quick. What's breaking one day might be old news the next, with overlapping crises stretching people's capacity to follow what's going on. But the stories we cover at the GRC aren't over when the day ends. We follow the stories over time, sometimes over years, and stay connected with sources as circumstances change.*

In 2021, the GRC partnered with NBC News to take a critical look at how the oil and gas industry was betting big on plastics. The first in the series, [The new steel? Hope and fear as a new plastics factory rises in Appalachia](#), detailed a plan to revitalize the region through petrochemicals. The jewel of that plan was Royal Dutch Shell's multibillion-dollar ethane "cracker."

Ahead of operations, the GRC and NBC News reported from Beaver County, Pennsylvania, documenting residents' concerns about air and water quality – and skepticism about the promised economic benefits, like jobs for residents.

The second in the series, [The house that plastic built](#), took a systematic look at the history of petrochemicals and how public subsidies are used to fuel both the demand and growth in the plastics industry.

Then in 2022, when Shell began operations in Beaver County, the GRC and NBC News were there – analyzing emissions records and speaking with residents who said their fears had become a reality. Our reporting, published in May 2023, revealed that the newly opened Shell plant had a series of malfunctions and exceeded their 12-month VOC emissions ceiling.

During the course of reporting, the GRC and NBC News questioned Shell and the Pennsylvania Department of Environmental Protection about the violations, and within weeks of speaking with the Pennsylvania DEP, we received word that Shell agreed to [a landmark settlement](#) with the state for exceeding emissions limits.



Koreatown, Los Angeles. From our upcoming podcast [State of Play](#). JESSE WINTER



Investigative journalism takes time and money. With mentorship and editorial guidance from the Global Reporting Centre and the Citizens, and with fellowship funding from the Tiny Foundation, both upcoming and established journalists had editorial and financial support to dig into issues about the role of technology in abuses of power. Their stories had impact:

Nigerian journalists Amos Abba and Jennifer Ugwa spent more than a year investigating how some loan app companies extort money from Nigerian consumers and violate their privacy. Just days after the investigation was published, the country's consumer regulatory body released a statement promising to increase its enforcement efforts against companies engaging in digital lending violations.

Martha Troian and Hilary Beaumont's deep dive cross-border investigation begins with the disappearance of a Cree woman named Shirley Soosay who went missing in the summer of 1980. And as the story explains, "it would take 40 years and a controversial DNA tool to finally bring Shirley Soosay home." Troian and Beaumont's investigation, published in High Country News, explores complex issues of DNA sovereignty and solving cases of missing and murdered Indigenous women and girls in Canada and the U.S.

Astha Rajvanshi's feature on internet shutdowns in Manipur explores the issue of digital censorship by the government in the face of human rights violations and conflict. As she writes, "India has ranked first in the world for shutting off the internet over the past five years..." Rajvanshi's reporting highlights the ways these shutdowns impact the lives and livelihoods of people in India. Her story was cited in an open letter written to the Telecom Regulatory Authority of India calling for free and open internet access.

Caitlin Thompson's investigation looks at a safety scoring tool that caseworkers in New Mexico's Children, Youth, and Families Department are required to use to decide whether at-risk children should be removed from their homes. Thompson's feature in Coda Story calls much-needed attention to the risks of overreliance on technology and algorithms for decision-making – especially when those decisions could mean life or death for some of America's most vulnerable children.



The Children, Youth, and Families Department  
offices, Albuquerque, New Mexico  
ADRIA MALCOLM / CODA STORY



At the height of the COVID-19 pandemic, as countries around the globe raced to vaccinate their populations, the world's wealthiest countries bought most of the available doses.

The Global Reporting Centre and *The Walrus* partnered to analyze [global inequities in the production and distribution of the vaccines](#). To help readers understand the issues and test their knowledge, the article included an interactive quiz.

*"I would never have thought to include a quiz in a public health story – but that's where collaborative journalism shines."*

SAMIA MADWAR, THE WALRUS

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In 2020, reporters from three continents and ten media organizations, including the GRC, [coordinated the release of an investigation into the private world of offshore banking](#). Based on more than 350,000 documents leaked from inside a trust company on the Isle of Jersey, a British Crown possession in the English Channel, the coverage contains information rarely glimpsed by the public.

Partners on the Jersey Offshore investigation included European Investigative Collaborations (EIC), Toronto Star, Der Spiegel, La Radio Télévision Suisse, The Bureau of Investigative Journalism, Mediapart, Open Media, The Black Sea, and Nacional. The teams published 22 articles in seven languages.

Then in 2021, the GRC partnered with Mother Jones to release [a feature investigation](#) based on a document uncovered in the leak that details how the world's wealthy hide their money offshore.

The latest is a four-part podcast series hosted by Sam Eifling, produced by the GRC in 2023 in partnership with Alexandra Wrage's *Bribe, Swindle or Steal*. [Trust Us tells the fascinating story behind the investigation](#) and reveals how journalists worked together to make sense of big data leaks. It also details how each international team connected local stories of tax evasion to the larger trend of hiding money offshore.



KATHLEEN FU

## Seeking solutions

*We know there are existential problems facing global journalism today. What are we going to do about it? As a centre based at a top-tier university, we lead and contribute to research that seeks solutions.*

The GRC's home is the University of British Columbia School of Journalism, Writing, and Media, which places us in the centre of ground-breaking research and global expertise.

Our partnership model extends beyond journalism to include academics and researchers. The GRC is currently partnered with over fifty researchers and faculty at UBC, across Canada, and abroad, in disciplines as varied as Business, Geography, and Law.

Through these partnerships we are able to ground our journalism in research and evidence. We are also able to study the state of the industry and better understand threats to the media landscape.

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Journalists are faced with increasing attacks in an effort to undermine their credibility. These reputational attacks happen both on and offline. They can involve everything from social media harassment to intimidation lawsuits and physical violence, and can come from anonymous accounts to the highest levels of government.

To explore this issue, we led a survey of 645 journalists based in 87 countries (and interviewed 54) about their experiences with reputational





attacks, in partnership with the Committee to Protect Journalists, PEN Canada, and the Disinformation Project at Simon Fraser University. We then published [an in-depth report](#) in partnership with the UBC School of Journalism, Writing, and Media with our findings and recommendations, which was shared by representatives from organizations like the Canadian Association of Journalists, UNESCO, ICIR Nigeria, and the International Federation of Journalists. Our accompanying interactive feature that explores the survey data has also since [been nominated for Best Data Journalism](#) at the 2024 Digital Publishing Awards.

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It feels like AI is [suddenly everywhere](#). Led by the UBC Centre for the Study of Democratic Institutions, we contributed to [a report that looks at some of the “peril and promise”](#) that AI represents to journalism.

A major peril is obvious: they enable and accelerate the creation and spread of false and misleading content. But what about the promise? It could make journalism more accessible to more people, or help journalists analyze massive datasets and document dumps. What is clear is that things are changing, quickly. At the GRC, we are staying on top of it all.

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As part of how we do global journalism differently, we are committed to reporting on the systems that connect the world. For the past seven years the Global Reporting Centre and its partners have led the field in reporting and research on global supply chains, spanning everything from medical supplies and plastics to clothing and seafood. Our work has uncovered corporate corruption, forced labour, and more.

A hallmark of this research initiative is our academic-journalist collaboration grant program, which fosters connections that help academics reach wider audiences, and journalists integrate scholarly research into their work. The most recent story supported in part by these grants was a feature story in *The New York Times* on the [growing market for stolen catalytic converters](#). The reporting was produced in partnership with Columbia University.

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Another stand-out partnership supported by the GRC in 2023 was the powerful collaboration between photojournalist Amy Romer, director of After Exploitation Maya Esslemont, GRC Fellow Emma Barnes-Lewis, and Professor Andrew Crane from the University of Bath’s School of Management. Together, they developed a series of projects focusing on support for survivors of modern slavery. The team produced [an exhibition in Bath, U.K.](#), a printed ‘zine,’ and facilitated a workshop with survivors.





# Training the next generation

*Sharing what we know is at the heart of what we do at the Global Reporting Centre. We offer paid internships and fellowships, educational resources, and significant support to the Global Reporting Program. We consider ourselves lucky to get to mentor and train a new generation of global journalists.*

The School of Journalism, Writing, and Media (JWAM) at UBC offers a two-year graduate degree in journalism. And at the GRC we work closely with JWAM and UBC graduate students by providing them with practical and professional work opportunities. We hire graduate students in areas like fact-checking, production, research, and reporting. We’ve had students and former alumni win some of the most prestigious awards in journalism through their contributions.

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The GRC hosts a supply chain reporting fellowship that provides a graduate student with the opportunity to learn from the researchers and journalists in our network. The most recent fellow, PhD student Emma Barnes-Lewis, was instrumental in the University of Bath project on human trafficking and modern slavery.

The Global Reporting Program at JWAM is also supported by the GRC. This yearlong graduate course was established by our Founder and Chair of the Board Peter Klein. The course is also taught by GRC-affiliated faculty members. Last year’s course was taught by our Executive Director Andrea Crossan and our Executive Editor Britney Dennison.

In addition, our team provides production support to students on writing, editing, publishing, graphics, data, visualization, and more, as well as mentorship in the form of guest lectures – this past year for fact-checking and archival work for documentary filmmaking.

This year’s cohort completed fieldwork in December 2023 in Paris, France and Lausanne, Switzerland. Their project is a 30-minute documentary for Al Jazeera’s People & Power (broadcasting in July 2024). The documentary focuses on how the Olympics reshape our cities, and specific on-the-ground impacts that the Paris 2024 Summer Games are having on housing, security, and the environment.



A Global Reporting Program student in the field in Paris, France. Taken during production of the project on housing and the Paris 2024 Olympics. POORNIMA FRANCIS





The 2022/2023 cohort of students, led by Professors Kathryn Gretsinger, Andrea Crossan, and Britney Dennison, traveled to the Mekong Delta to investigate how rice farmers are impacted by, and adapting to, the climate crisis. Students reported for Mongabay from [Cambodia](#) and [Vietnam](#) – two countries with incredibly restrictive press freedom.

Students investigated how political pressure in the name of conservation is upending the lives and livelihoods of the small farmers that fill the world's rice bowl. They interviewed top-ranking government officials, and produced a series of three stories that were widely shared by key stakeholders, including the Deputy Director of Human Rights Watch's Asia Division.

*“Throughout the editorial process, the students showed great professionalism and commitment to ensuring that these stories were told accurately, respectfully and engagingly. The result is a portfolio of work that I think we can all be proud of.”*

ISABEL ESTERMAN, EDITOR FOR MONGABAY



Photos (clockwise from top):

SHAURYA KSHATRI, JJ MAZZUCOTELLI, MEGAN WILDE, JJ MAZZUCOTELLI



# 05

## About us

*The most impactful stories are  
the ones we tell together*

### Diversity, equity, & inclusion

Equity guides our journalism, from the stories we choose to the partners we work with. It's not just about the journalism though, it's about how we share our work – like our captioning and translation practices, the web accessibility guidelines we follow in our digital pieces, and non-paywalled access to our stories.

In January 2024, the GRC advanced its commitment to DEI by creating an internal framework that supplements [UBC's policies and guidelines](#) to include considerations that relate to global journalism research and practice.

### A small but mighty team

<b>Peter Klein</b> Founder & Chair of the Board	<b>Sharon Nadeem</b> Producer & Head of Partnerships
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<b>Andrea Crossan</b> Executive Director	<b>Michelle Meiklejohn</b> Comms & Audience Engagement Lead
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<b>Britney Dennison</b> Executive Editor	<b>Katarina Sabados</b> Reporter
---	-------------------------------------

<b>Andrea Zeelie-Varga</b> Development Officer	<b>Jane Lister</b> Research Manager, Hidden Costs
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<b>Andrew Munroe</b> Digital Producer
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### Honours & recognition

Some of our highest honours include an Emmy for Best Investigation, a Sigma Delta Chi award, several Edward R. Murrow awards, and an Investigative Reporters and Editors award. This year, we've been recognized with:

#### Anthem Award

Gold, Diversity, Equity, and Inclusion in Education for a Literacy Program or Platform for the Empowerment Journalism Guide

#### Bill Good Award

An award that “honours a B.C. individual or organization that makes a significant contribution to journalism in the province, or addresses a community's needs and benefits via journalism”

#### Jack Webster Award

Finalist, Excellence in Multimedia Journalism for ‘Disaster Land Grabs’ Worldwide and in British Columbia

#### Digital Publishing Award

Honourable Mention, Best Feature Article (Long) for ‘Disaster Land Grabs’ Worldwide and in British Columbia

#### Canadian Online Publishing Award

Silver, Best Feature Article – Academic for Small farmers in limbo as Cambodia wavers on Tonle Sap conservation rules; Finalist, Best Video Content – Academic for Rice farmers left in limbo after conservation crackdown in Cambodia's Tonle Sap Lake

#### Telly Award

Visual Art Direction, The Carbon Cage

Our base at the University of British Columbia allows us to work with a large network of journalists, scholars, students, and community members to combine evidence-based reporting with community and academic collaboration.

#### Special Thanks

Kamal Al-Solaylee, Director of UBC JWAM  
Emma Arkell, former Social Media Editor  
David Rummel, former Editor-at-large  
Rithika Shenoy, former Admin Assistant

#### Research Assistants

Juliana Konrad (current)  
Bea Lehmann (former)  
Sonal Gupta (former)  
Hanna Hett (former)

#### Advisory Board

Peter Klein  
Yuen Ying Chan  
Tracey Durning  
Salimah Ebrahim  
Jon Festinger  
Rima Hyder  
Scott McIntyre  
Farid Rohani  
Anya Schiffrin  
Ronald Stern  
Charles Tsai  
David Willkie  
Dana Wolfe

#### Collaborating Organizations

After Exploitation  
Committee to Protect Journalists  
Disinformation Project at Simon Fraser University  
European Investigative Collaborations  
PEN Canada  
The Citizens  
TRACE International  
UBC Centre for the Study of Democratic Institutions  
UBC Department of Geography  
UBC School of Journalism, Writing, and Media  
University of Bath

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Jennifer Ugwa  
Lucas Vidigal  
Gustavo Villela  
Eleonore Voisard  
Amelia Williams  
Jesse Winter  
Efra Zelaya

#### Media Partners

Coda Story  
Foundation for Investigative Journalism  
High Country News  
Mongabay  
NBC News  
The New York Times  
The Walrus  
Time Magazine



# Funders

We acknowledge with gratitude the following current funders for investing in our projects. [View our full list of funders](#). We maintain editorial independence and strive for the highest ethical standards and donor transparency.

## Global Reporting Centre

- Dr Lloyd and Mrs Kay Chapman Charitable Foundation
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- Lohn Foundation
- Park Foundation
- R and J Stern Family Foundation

- Social Sciences and Humanities Research Council of Canada
- Stardust Fund
- Tiny Foundation
- TRACE Foundation
- UBC School of Journalism, Writing, and Media
- Vancouver Institute

## Global Reporting Program

- Angus Reid Institute
- Giustra Foundation
- Mindset Foundation
- UBC School of Journalism, Writing, and Media



Help us make the practice of global journalism more equitable, inclusive, and collaborative

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Make a donation

Use our guides



(Top) Global Reporting Program instructor Britney Dennison with a student in the field in Lausanne, Switzerland. ANDREW MUNROE

(Bottom) GRC contributor Clément Beauvois filming in Paris, France. SOLANA PASQUAL





GRC Producer Sharon Nadeem recording for  
our upcoming podcast. JESSE WINTER

Global  
journalism,  
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differently.

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