

Board Report of 2025

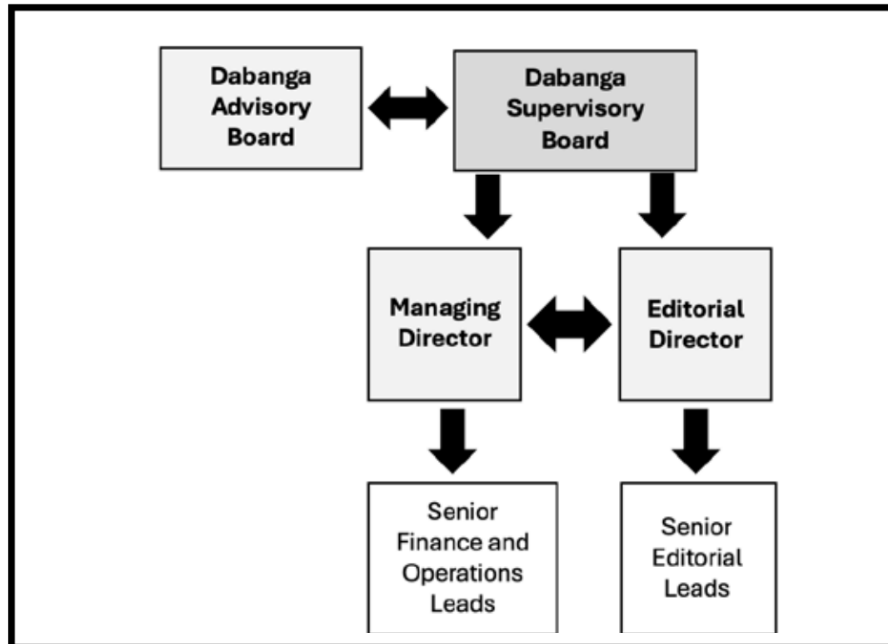
This Annual Report outlines the activities implemented in 2025 by Stichting Dabanga Foundation (Dabanga). The aim being for Dabanga to play a meaningful fourth estate role in Sudan, contributing to peace, reconciliation and the country's long-term democratic transition.

Origins & Statutory Goal

Stichting Dabanga Foundation is a foundation created to enable Sudanese people in Sudan, in all states and regions to participate in the exchange of knowledge, news and information, with the vision of a democratic Sudan where freedom, peace and justice prevail, and where human rights are enshrined, in particular the right to freedom of expression and access to information.

Dabanga was registered as a foundation (Stichting) under Dutch law on 09-02-2021 (RSIN 862236733) with a corporate seat in the municipality of Amsterdam. Before this, the organisation functioned as a project team with Free Press Unlimited (FPU). As of 09-02-2021, the organisation operates independently with an office in the municipality of Amsterdam.

Board, Key Staff Positions, and Structure



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| Supervisory Board | |
| Chair and Member of the Supervisory Board | Hamid Ali Mohamed Nur Hussein, Date of entry into office 08-02-2021 |
| Member of the Supervisory Board | Johannes Jacobus Daalmeijer, Date of entry into office 08-02-2021 |
| Member of the Supervisory Board | Abdelbagi Jibril, Date of entry into office 08-02-2021 |
| Executive Board | |
| Secretary/Treasurer and Editorial Director | Kamal Elsadig, Date of entry into office 08-02-2021 |
| Managing Director | Nigel Ballard Date of Entry into Office 08-02-2021 |

It is the task of the Supervisory Board to supervise the policy of the Executive Board and the general course of business in the Foundation and the organization with it. In the performance of their task the Supervisory Board members shall be guided by the interest of the Foundation and organization with it. No remuneration is granted to the Supervisory Board members. Expenses shall be compensated to the Supervisory Board members on presentation of documentary evidence. The Supervisory Board last met for its Annual General Meeting in April 2025.

The Executive Board is vested with the conduct and management of the business and the affairs of the Foundation. The Foundation shall be represented by the Executive Board, in so far as not otherwise provided for by law. In performing their duties, the Executive Board members shall regard the interests of the Foundation and the organization connected with it. The Supervisory Board determines the remuneration and the other employment conditions of the Executive Board members.

Executive Summary

Dabanga’s progress over the year of 2025 occurred against the backdrop of dramatic changes within Sudan as the ongoing conflict continued to evolve. The war entered its third year in 2025 with no sign of slowing. The conflict between the Sudanese Armed Forces (SAF) and the paramilitary Rapid Support Forces (RSF) has reshaped the country politically and geographically while the human cost continues to mount.

The Sudanese Armed Forces made significant early gains, retaking areas around Khartoum and breaking the RSF's siege of Al-Obeid. But the RSF consolidated control across Darfur and in July established a rival administration in Nyala, leaving Sudan effectively governed by two competing

authorities. The defining moment of the year came in late October when El Fasher fell to the RSF after a 540-day siege. The mass killings that followed drew emergency UN sessions and brief international attention, but no meaningful political response. Peace talks through the US-led Quartet didn't produce much. Humanitarian funding contracted further as Western governments shifted resources toward defence spending. Sudan ended the year divided and under-resourced, with 8.6 million internally displaced and over 3 million refugees in neighbouring countries.

It is against this backdrop that Dabanga continued to operate in 2025. The year brought serious financial pressure following the withdrawal of US funding in January, which accounted for nearly 70% of Dabanga's budget. This forced reductions across staffing, broadcast hours and programming. Despite this, Dabanga maintained continuous operations and ended the year in a stronger position than it began.

Key achievements in 2025 included:

- Maintained shortwave broadcasts reaching an estimated 2.3 million listeners, with daily hours partially restored to 1.5 hours following the January cuts
- Reached a monthly average of 4.1 million Sudanese across online platforms
- Grew the YouTube channel from 35.000 to 57.000 subscribers, with monthly reach averaging 3.1 million users
- Published around 2.300 articles across Arabic and English, with nine freelance reporters hired in late 2025 to sustain output
- Launched new audience-focused programming including Plain Speaking, Dabanga Rap and Let Your Voice Be Heard
- Successfully appealed the suspension of the Arabic Facebook page to Meta's Oversight Board, resulting in lifted restrictions and recovered reach
- Completed paid campaigns with UNESCO and the ICC, generating supplementary income
- Increased donations following a sustained fundraising effort including a dedicated fundraising event in Amsterdam
- Strengthened the Sudan Media Forum partnership, producing Sudan This Week and hosting 62 partner articles on the website

Main Targets and Activities in 2025

Objectives:

- Provide news, information & knowledge accessible and relevant for all Sudanese
- Provide news and analysis content relevant to diverse audiences
- Provide informational and educational content to diverse audiences

Objective 1 – Provide news, information & knowledge accessible and relevant for all Sudanese

Shortwave

Dabanga's shortwave broadcast continued to serve an estimated 2.3 million-strong audience within Sudan and in the border regions of neighbouring countries. As a result of the January 2025 US funding cuts, the broadcast duration was reduced to one hour per day and later partially restored to a daily total of 1.5 hours by March 2025. The value of Dabanga's core radio service was made clear in the wake of this slashed broadcasting, when displaced and vulnerable audience members contacted Dabanga via online channels to request full resumption of radio news, stating that they have no alternative means of staying informed on events in the country. As other consistently reliable sources of accurate and unbiased news and information continue to be unavailable to Sudanese, the resilient and unblockable nature of shortwave broadcasts provide an information lifeline to audience members.

Online Radio

The setup of Dabanga's digital radio stream was completed in 2024, seeing enhanced sound quality to provide online listeners a high-quality listening experience. Offering a 24/7 stream, the radio service allows Dabanga to serve online Sudanese living outside of the shortwave coverage area. The internet radio service has also been integrated into the FroggyTalk App - a diaspora-focused international calling platform that also provides support for those living abroad. This offers an additional means of receiving Dabanga's news and analysis content for the global Sudanese diaspora.

Website

Dabanga's bilingual website caters to the Sudanese online population, both in-country and abroad. The majority of Dabanga's 2,300 articles over 2025 was published in Arabic, accounting for the primary language of Dabanga's audience. To offer English-speaking audiences and international readers access to reliable Sudanese news, key articles were also published in English. A monthly average of 152 Arabic and 42 English articles were published over 2025.

Despite a mid-year dip in website traffic, Dabanga's website saw a resurgence of internet traffic in late-2025, averaging 87,131 monthly page views. However, this was a decrease in comparison to the 2024 average of 103,000 monthly page views. The English language page contributed greatly to this increase, with visitor figures climbing from 17,114 monthly users in Q1 to 54,469

monthly users in Q4. By comparison, the Arabic page rose from an average of 19.133 monthly in users Q1 to 44.711 in Q4.

Satellite TV

Dabanga's satellite television channel offered Sudanese an alternative means of accessing news 24/7. As a result of January's funding cuts, the channel's technical capacity was downgraded to still images with simple text. This ensured that those obtaining Dabanga's news content via satellite TV are still able to obtain this information despite greatly reduced capacity.

Social Media

Dabanga's social media displayed mixed performance over 2025, with the largest following being present on the Arabic language Facebook page. Reaching 887,700 followers by the end of 2025 (a small growth from 875,000 in 2024), the page had an average monthly reach of 682.345 unique users, a sharp decline from 2024's average of 1.4 million. The majority of the page's audience (56%) also fell into the 'youth' (under-35) category that comprises Dabanga's primary target audience online.

A severe challenge came in September 2025, when the Arabic language Facebook page, already under restriction from Meta, was entirely suspended as a result of inaccurate flagging by automated moderation 'bots'. Old posts referencing RSF statements were misconstrued to be supportive of the group, which is listed in Meta's Dangerous Individuals and Organisations list. As a consequence of this, the page was not visible to Facebook users. Dabanga's team referred this case to The Oversight Board, an independent body established to review cases and pass binding judgments to Meta. As a result of this independent review, all restrictions were lifted, resulting in an immediate uptick in reach. As a result, in 2026, monthly reach has increased notably to 1.3 million users in March, the first time such a high figure has been obtained since October 2024.

The Arabic Facebook page was complemented by the smaller English language page with a present following of 16.110, which ensures that key news stories from Sudan are made accessible to non-Arabic speakers.

Dabanga also continued to post on a niche, bilingual X (formerly Twitter) account, which reached 53,700 followers by March 2026, up from 52,000 in December 2024. A monthly average of 167.000 users were reached on X over the course of 2025, down from 400.000 in 2024.

Dabanga's Youtube channel proved to be the most successful online platform over 2025, surpassing 57.000 followers by the end of the year a significant growth from 35.000 followers at the end of 2024. Monthly reach in 2025 averaged at 3.1 million unique users, as radio programmes adapted to video proved to be highly popular. The freelancer-produced Dabanga Trends repackaged news stories into short-format 'explainer' videos popular with younger visitors, indicating a move towards more platform-specific content types.

Dabanga has also continued to use Soundcloud as an archive of all radio programmes produced, although this platform is not actively promoted to audiences.

Objective 2 - Provide news and analysis content relevant to diverse audiences

Dabanga's core output is its news content. By making available news in various forms (audio, text, graphic/video), lengths and platforms, Dabanga maximized its reach among a target audience with different preferences for accessing media.

Audio & Broadcast News

Dabanga's news headlines are produced twice daily, 5 days a week. These consist of a brief morning headlines programme lasting 30 minutes and a longer news and analysis programme, *Sudan Today*, which presents the headlines followed by an interview with relevant topical experts, who offer insights and analysis of the details and context behind the leading 2 to 3 news headlines. This allows Dabanga to break down complex issues for better audience understanding of events in Sudan. News headlines are disseminated via Dabanga's shortwave radio broadcast, online radio, satellite TV channel, YouTube channel, Arabic Facebook page and Soundcloud account.

In late 2025 Dabanga has also entered into discussion with the German broadcaster Deutsche Welle to air their *Sudan Now* programme, a roundup of the week's events in Sudan. This will run on Sundays at Dabanga's regular evening broadcast time, when feature programme broadcasting is generally limited, thus providing added value and a plurality of voices and perspectives to listeners across the country. Video adaptations of the programme will also be shared via social media.

Video News

Dabanga has continued to disseminate information via specially made online video news-flashes, lasting 3.5 minutes. Shared daily across Dabanga's Whatsapp news channel, which now has 4.700 followers, these allow users with low internet connectivity and small data packages to keep informed of the top 10 stories, complete with headlines and concise overviews. Longer video news reports, featuring expert guests and representatives of concerned parties, have been shared via social media, with the most popular of these in 2025 reaching 44.000 unique users via Facebook.

Website Articles

Dabanga's bilingual website offers written articles that align with the news headlines broadcast over radio. These articles make the majority of the website's content. In 2025, the website published a daily average of 5 Arabic-language articles and 1.4 in English, down from 14 and 2.5 respectively in 2024. This was a direct result of reduced funding and therefore slashed staffing limiting newswriting capacity across Dabanga's editorial team. This output catered

to a monthly mean of 27,000 Arabic-reading and 29,000 English reading visitors. This indicated a shift in the pages' strengths from 2024, when the Arabic language page received 40,000 monthly visitors and the English page 25,000. The hiring of 9 freelance reporters in late 2025 supported the editorial team in maintaining a consistent output despite the vast reduction of resources experienced earlier in the year, these staff proving to be a cost-effective lifeline to Dabanga as a result.

A number of notable articles from 2025 included:

- The [signing of the Constitution](#) of the the RSF-led Founding Alliance in Nairobi in March
- The [return of over 160,000 Sudanese refugees](#) in April 2025
- A [comprehensive overview](#) of the impacts of the RSF drone campaign against Port Sudan
- An [investigation](#) of the August bombing of an aid convoy in Mellit, North Darfur as both parties accused the other of responsibility
- [Extensive reporting](#) of the mass killings that occurred in the wake of RSF forces capturing North Darfur capital El Fasher in November.

An important development to note over 2025 was the cessation of verification article production, as the withdrawal of US funding meant that the relevant staff members employed as part of the Political Reporting Unit had to be let go. Instead, it was decided to include verification techniques in daily article outputs so that audiences are kept aware of the methodology behind newsgathering. The [SAF claims of control of the Mansheya Bridge](#) in March were verified through analysis of social media footage. In April, [RSF claims of downing of an SAF plane](#) were confirmed through on-the-ground sources. In May, the continuation of [RSF drone strikes](#) against SAF power centre Port Sudan was corroborated by direct eyewitness reports and a local journalist. An investigation in August looked into whether a viral video of an [RSF soldier shooting an unarmed civilian prisoner](#) is authentic. A [December news roundup](#) used eyewitness accounts to verify a drone strike against a kindergarten and hospital in South Kordofan, and the shelling of a market on the Sudan-Chad border.

Dabanga's website has also hosted articles from partners in the Sudan Media Forum, with 62 articles from the network shared in 2025. Articles covered a broad range of topics including [volunteer humanitarian initiatives in Eastern Sudan](#), the disintegration and [division of the Sudanese State](#) under the warring parties, the [participation of youth groups](#) in local peacebuilding and [the struggles faced by pregnant women](#) as healthcare systems collapsed. This collaboration has not only allowed Dabanga to maintain a strong output on both website pages but also to provide a platform to smaller independent Sudanese news outlets in the support of a fragile media landscape.

Objective 3 - Provide informational and educational content to diverse audiences

Dabanga's programming ensures that all demographics of Sudanese society are represented to as great a degree as possible, with an emphasis on matters important to vulnerable and marginalised communities and demographics. This is achieved through thematic programmes offering information and improving awareness of social and political topics from all perspectives,

and for all audiences. Dabanga's weekly informational and educational radio programmes are broadcast on shortwave radio, satellite TV, social media, website, and social media.

Kandaka & Meryam Programme

Kandaka and Meryam provides news, analysis and important discussions through a gendered lens, allowing female audiences to share their views whilst also hearing programme contributions from female experts, activists and policymakers. Funding cuts in January 2025 severely hampered production of the programme in February and it also became a 15 minute segment instead. The funding cuts also meant that the programme's producer was not kept on which made consistent production difficult to achieve. As a result only 26 of the planned episodes were broadcast over the year. Notable episodes included:

- A 2-part programme in January documenting and examining the arrests of women accused of collaborating with the RSF, a charge that can carry the death penalty.
- An audience-led episode in October which saw women share their experiences of the Khartoum-centred fighting that had dominated the initial phases of the conflict.
- A November Kandaka segment within the *Sudan Today* programme that explored how women could be meaningfully included in any future peace process.

Youth Issues Programme

The Youth Issues programme has continued to share news relevant to younger audiences (defined as those under 34 years old), including interviewees such as activists and displaced youth. Overall, 39 Youth issues episodes were produced in 2025. Some of the key episodes were:

- A May episode looked outside of Sudan's borders to focus on the activities of the Nairobi Youth Network in Kenya, where displaced Sudanese youth campaign for a peaceful democratic transition.
- A 2-part July programme examined the role of social media in the lives of young Sudanese, with the second part focusing exclusively on the role it plays in romantic relationships.
- As a part of Dabanga's participation in the 'Hold Before You Send It' campaign to address hate speech, an episode in September aired testimonies and opinions on the matter from young audience members.
- In the wake of mass atrocities against El Fasher civilians in November, survivor Nihal Ahmed shared his story and explained how the siege and takeover of the city impacted young people.

Scales of Justice Programme

Addressing themes of transitional justice, peacebuilding and international human rights mechanisms, *Scales of Justice* has covered an array of topics across all levels (local, national, international) throughout 35 episodes in 2025.

- As Sudan launched an International Court of Justice complaint against the UAE in April, *Scales of Justice* broke down the legal basis of the allegations based on the Geneva Convention for a better audience understanding.
- An August episode hosted journalist Shawqi Abdulaziz and lawyer Nafisa Hajar, who discussed the proliferation of hate speech in both traditional and alternative media, emphasising its impacts on the rights of those victimised by harmful narratives.
- After the ICC conviction of former Janjaweed commander Ali Kushayb on 27 counts of crimes against humanity and war crimes in November, a corresponding episode was shaped by audience polls and questions.

Sudan Files/Plain Speaking Programme

Dabanga has continued putting important audience questions to policymakers and (aspiring) leaders through the interview-format programme *Sudan Files* and later on *Plain Speaking*. Informed in advance by audience messages and responses to open questions gathered in the preceding week, guests have included:

- Dr. Elhadi Idriss, President of the Revolutionary Front, who answered questions about the prospects and challenges of a peace government.
- Women's rights advocate Rong Shamila, who in June answered listeners' queries about the potential for women's participation in political and peacebuilding processes.
- Foreign Minister Ammar Daldoum from the RSF-led 'Foundation Government', appearing on the October debut of the programme *Plain Speaking*, where he was asked about allegations of RSF war crimes and reports of unease within his own SPLM-AI Hilu party at their participation in the alliance.

Overall in 2025, 32 episodes have been produced.

Weekend Programmes

Throughout the first half of 2025, Dabanga's weekend broadcasts composed of reruns of feature programmes. In late August, this changed with the redesign of the weekend program aimed at providing listeners with a wider variety of themes and increasing the cultural and audience-focused content. These programmes saw strong positive feedback from listeners and allowed Dabanga to provide fresh perspectives and new voices to listeners;

- Let Your Voice Be Heard, a programme sharing messages from listeners across the country and offering representation to the full breadth of Dabanga's audience.
- Saloon; a discussion programme focusing on culture and arts hosting influential figures from across Sudanese music, art and theatre.

- Dabanga Rap; showcasing Sudanese hip-hop music and featuring popular and upcoming artists, aimed at creating better engagement and listenership among young Sudanese.
- Poetic expression; audience's original poetry submissions shared either via voice message, or written text read aloud by the programme presenter.
- Sudan This Week; a Sudan Media Forum collaboration: and examination of the international news headlines about Sudan from the past week

Fundraising and Commercial Activities

In February and March 2025, Dabanga produced and broadcast content with a Prevention of Violent Extremism (PVE) theme in a commercial campaign with UNESCO. Scripting, recording and sharing short audio dramas via radio and social media, the campaign not only brought in approximately 12.000 euros but also supported Dabanga to meet donor objectives related to countering misinformation.

Dabanga also undertook a series of paid media campaigns in 2025 with the ICC regarding the trial of former Janjaweed commander Ali Kushayb. Three separate campaigns shared short PSA-style infomercials via shortwave and longer social media video explainers, informing Dabanga's audiences on the trial's closing statements, the guilty verdict on 27 of the 31 charges, and the subsequent sentencing. Two further campaigns have been agreed and are in the contracting process for 2026.

Dabanga's donation drive picked up after the withdrawal of US funding in order to supplement the unstable financial resources available after the loss of almost 70% of funding. A key element to this was an increased level of engagement with (inter)national media outlets such as [De Volkskrant](#), [Het Parool](#), [AT5](#) and [NPR](#). The switch to using Paypal as Dabanga's primary donation platform meant that the resulting surge of donations was easily processed at a reduced fee compared to that of the previously used platform, [Geef.nl](#). Alongside media appearances, Dabanga staff also frequently physically attended Sudan awareness events to maintain a presence in the minds of the Sudanese diaspora and supporters in the Netherlands. One such event, 'Break the Silence for Sudan' hosted by nonprofit events organisation Marimba Amsterdam, was held specifically as a fundraiser for Dabanga, bringing awareness of our funding situation to the forefront of consciousness among impact-minded people and organisations. As a cumulative result of this consistent fund-and-awareness raising effort, a larger donation of 20,000 euros was received from the nonprofit Stichting Spons in November, shoring up Dabanga's unallocated funds as the year closed. The total net income from Dabanga's commercial and fundraising activities in 2025 totalled 61.013 euros.

Financial position in 2025

Income for 2025 was **almost similar to previous year**, totalling €1.676.560 compared to €1.680.752 in 2024.

Expenditures were in line with the budgeted amounts as proposed to the donors who make the work of Stichting Dabanga Foundation possible. All donors approved the reported expenditures and continued their support after the reporting year, with the exception of one (see below). The year-end result shows a **deficit of €53.361**, primarily due to the sick leave of one staff member.

Typically, the foundation is able to accurately project and manage its expenditures, thanks to its extensive experience with the costs associated with its activities and the stability of its internal and external teams.

Reserves

In 2025, the Foundation closed the year with a deficit, resulting in a continuity reserve of **-/€33,354** (year-end 2024: €32,600). The continuity reserve serves as a buffer for periods without funding or for costs that cannot or will not be reimbursed by donors.

Restoring the reserve remains a priority. Since July 2025, a margin on staff hours has been charged to projects, specifically aimed at gradually rebuilding the reserve. However, this recovery is not without challenges: staffing levels decreased by 30% in 2025 compared to 2024, and staff illness has had an additional negative impact on the reserve position. As a result, the Foundation remains significantly dependent on other income to achieve a positive result, and thereby grow its reserves. In line with best practice guidelines for non-profit organizations in the Netherlands, a continuity reserve of approximately 50% of annual operating costs is considered prudent. For Dabanga, with average annual operating costs of **€1,729,921**, this corresponds to a target level of **€ 900.000**. Bridging the current deficit to reach this target level requires a multi-year effort and is contingent on the stable development of other income streams.

Investment policy

Stichting Dabanga Foundation does not hold any financial investments or equity participations. Its investments in equipment are fully funded by donors who cover the entire cost, such as the mobile studios, broadcast equipment, office equipment, and furniture. The Foundation's policy is to make such investments only when the costs can be fully covered by grants. Given the currently low level of the continuity reserve, it is not considered desirable to invest beyond these means.

Financial continuity and expectations for 2026 and beyond

The foundation has still ambitious goals for 2026, building on both our core newsroom work and continued investments in organizational development, including exploring income-generating activities beyond project grants.

Following the stop work order by the US Administration in early 2025, which led to the suspension and later termination of our main grant, the foundation undertook significant cost

reductions. Staff and operational costs were lowered, including relocating to a more cost-efficient office space as of October 1, 2025, for a four-year period. Recently, we received confirmation that costs incurred due to the stop work order will be reimbursed by the US Administration.

For 2026, the Foundation has prepared a conservative budget of €1.3 million, slightly lower than the adjusted 2025 budget of €1.5 million, reflecting the Foundation's continued commitment to cost discipline. Costs will be further optimized by combining tasks and functions within the current team.

The 2026 budget reflects a projected deficit of €108,000, attributable to unforeseen *non-project-related* costs in the current period. The board and management are actively working together to address this funding gap and are confident that the necessary resources will be identified to safeguard the Foundation's continuity and operations through 2027.

On a positive note, funding coverage for all other 2026 project activities is secured, a result of the continued dedication of the project team. The Foundation aims to maintain this trajectory into 2027. With ongoing cost optimization, careful financial planning, and focused efforts to grow unearmarked income, the Foundation remains confident in its ability to achieve its objectives and ensure its long-term sustainability.

Budget 2026 in EUR

Income

| | |
|------------------------|------------------|
| Income from grants: | 1.287.960 |
| Income from donations: | 10.000 |
| Total income: | 1.297.960 |

Expenditure

| | |
|---------------------------|------------------|
| Staff costs: | 863.098 |
| Broadcast costs: | 391.165 |
| Activity costs: | 53.928 |
| Organisational costs: | 98.241 |
| Total expenditure: | 1.406.432 |

Balance of income and expenditure:

-108.472