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COLLABORATIVE JOURNALISM IN ALTERNATIVE MEDIA TO REPORT THE MARGINALIZED ISSUE

(Case Study Collaborative Journalism in Project Multatuli of Alternative Media in Indonesia)

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Abstract

Marginalized issue in the media doesn't get portion in the mainstream media. Marginalized issue is the unprofitable for mainstream media because it brings the minimal profit. Moreover, the phenomenon of online media users in Indonesia is dominated by generation milineal dan generation Z. They are prefer reading the unqualified content than the qualified. As a result, the marginalized issue doesn't get the interest for them. This research aims to see how the alternative media practice the collaborative journalism to report the marginalized issue. Meanwhile, the alternative media places a portion of the news coverage on marginalized issue in the form of of indepth reporting. The alternative media in Indonesia is funded by funding such as NGOs, or research institutions to conduct the news production. Funding supports the alternative media because they lack of human resources and the media operating cost. The research used qualitative research with a case study approach. Researcher used the indept interview technique to gather the data. Researcher interviewed with the editorial team of Multatuli Project. The results of the study stated that the marginalized is a routine issue that published by the alternative media. Project Multatuli wanted to develop the critical thinking from society in this issue. On the process of making the indept news, they have shared the idea, interview with the source, and written the news. The whole of process of collaboration reporting has funded by donor that are also interested in the issue. This research also stated that in the digitalization era, alternative media can still survive without using a rating approach.

Keywords: alternative media, collaborative journalism, Indonesia cases, marginalized issue

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Abstrak

*Isu yang terpinggirkan di media tidak mendapatkan porsi di media arus utama. Isu yang terpinggirkan merupakan hal yang tidak menguntungkan bagi media arus utama karena hanya menghasilkan keuntungan yang minim. Terlebih lagi, fenomena pengguna media online di Indonesia didominasi oleh generasi milineal dan generasi Z. Mereka lebih suka membaca konten yang tidak berkualitas dibandingkan dengan konten yang berkualitas. Akibatnya, isu yang terpinggirkan tidak menarik bagi mereka. Penelitian ini bertujuan untuk melihat bagaimana media alternatif mempraktikkan jurnalisme kolaboratif untuk memberitakan isu-isu yang terpinggirkan. Sementara itu, media alternatif memberikan porsi pemberitaan terhadap isu-isu yang terpinggirkan dalam bentuk *indepth reporting*. Media alternatif di Indonesia didanai oleh lembaga-lembaga seperti LSM atau lembaga penelitian untuk melakukan produksi berita. Pendanaan mendukung media alternatif karena mereka kekurangan sumber daya manusia dan biaya operasional media. Penelitian ini menggunakan metode penelitian kualitatif dengan pendekatan studi kasus. Peneliti menggunakan teknik wawancara mendalam untuk mengumpulkan data. Peneliti melakukan wawancara dengan tim redaksi Multatuli Project. Hasil penelitian menyatakan bahwa marginalisasi merupakan isu rutin yang diterbitkan oleh media alternatif. Project Multatuli ingin mengembangkan pemikiran kritis masyarakat dalam isu ini. Dalam proses pembuatan *indepth news*, mereka melakukan sharing ide, wawancara dengan narasumber, dan penulisan berita. Seluruh proses pelaporan kolaborasi ini didanai oleh donor yang juga tertarik dengan isu tersebut. Penelitian ini juga menyatakan bahwa di era digitalisasi, media alternatif masih bisa bertahan tanpa menggunakan pendekatan rating.*

Kata kunci: media alternatif, jurnalisme kolaboratif, kasus di Indonesia, isu marjinalisasi

INTRODUCTION

The fulfilment of the rights of marginalised groups in Indonesia tends to be sidelined by the government. The 2022 Human Rights Index research shows a lack of protection for vulnerable groups such as religious or belief minorities, racial or ethnic minorities, disabled minorities, sexual minorities and indigenous peoples. Setara Institute noted that the average score of rights promotion for minority groups is only 2.8, and these groups have not received an active voice in the government agenda (Setara Institute, 2024). Meanwhile, the sidelining of the rights of marginalised groups is also reinforced by their weak position in the mass media. The mass media tends to highlight minority groups when conflict and violence occur. Sulistyo (2021) states that the media are reluctant to report the facts of the marginalisation of rights and suppression of freedom of minority groups.

Several cases in Indonesia prove this. The coverage of transgender women or gender and sexuality minorities also does not focus on the incident, but emphasises the side of their identity and sexual

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choices, and tends to corner them (AJI Jakarta, 2020). Listiorini, Asteria, & Hidayana (2019, p. 1) explain that based on Kompas Daily digital data, LGBT news has started to appear in the media since 4 August 1968. Meanwhile, in 2016, news in the mass media, especially online news, was filled with hate speech against Lesbian, Gay, Bisexual and Transgender (LGBT) groups. Listiorini, Asteria, & Hidayana (2019) also confirmed that LGBT issues have become an important issue in a number of countries such as the United Kingdom, the United States, and Africa where the mass media there portray the group's weak position in society. Sulistyo (2021) stated that even during the Covid 19 pandemic, the group still received violence such as opposition and sealing of houses of worship, prohibition of worship, destruction of houses of worship, and refusal to bury bodies.

Bombastic and sensational news tends to appear more often without considering the impact of minority groups so that the situation of these groups becomes increasingly vulnerable (Sulisyo, 2021). The mass media, which should be the voice of the community, especially vulnerable groups, and aims to create community welfare (Kovach, 2014, p. 29), has not been able to voice the rights of these vulnerable groups. On the other hand, the issue of marginality is also considered less sexy and profitable for internet users in Indonesia. This is supported by the data of the largest internet users, namely generation Z (born 1997-2012) and millennials (born 1981-1996) who like light content. Data from the Indonesian Internet Service Providers Association (APJII) 2024 states that the internet penetration of generation Z is around 87.02%, while the millennial generation is around 93.17% (APJII, 2024). They tend to consume light content that is not educational and entertaining (Pramesti, 2022). The Digital Indonesia Vision 2045 report (Kominfo, 2024) also states that internet use is still mostly done for non-productive purposes such as filling leisure time because Indonesians tend to like light content that does not educate and lack internet ethics on social media (spreading SARA issues, hoaxes, and hate speech). Pramesti (2022) also added that Indonesians prefer clickbait content over other content. *Clickbait* content is content that traps to attract readers, and this content tends to contain light content

The lack of interest among Indonesians to consume quality content, such as news on minority groups, makes the mass media tend to follow the wishes of the market. This is unavoidable because the mass media in Indonesia is in the free market environment phase. According to Yoedtadi & Pribadi (2020, p. 1), this free environment phase relates to, 1) the phase where the media

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prioritises business interests over public interests such as information and education, and 2) media freedom in the reform era which tends to lead to concentrated media ownership. This media ownership is held by media businessmen who concentrate on developing the media business. Masduki & D'Haenens, L. (2022) stated that there was a rapid growth of the media industry between 2011 and 2020 which showed a diversity point of view. The results of Masduki & D'Haenens, L. (2022) research show that in 2020, there are 8 media owners who control the media in Indonesia. These eight large groups not only show the media oligarchy in Indonesia, but also intervene in the newsroom and journalistic dynamics in it. As during the election dynamics since 2014 and 2019, the political interests of media owners have also influenced the content shared with the public. Tapsell (2014) added that the power and influence of oligarchs over national politics is further exacerbated by the Jakarta-centric nature of news production. Tapsell (2014) stated that 70% of national news on national TV comes from Java, and half of that comes from Jakarta. This leads to a content gap where local content outside Java and Jakarta is not accommodated in Indonesian media.

The phenomenon of media ownership in Indonesia has a dominant force in editorial work, where the newsroom should be neutral from any interest. The newsroom has the important task of reporting information that educates the public. This is in accordance with the role of mass media, which is a bridge for the community, including vulnerable groups, to be able to express their opinions in public. De Jong (in Listiorini, Asteria, & Hidayana (2019) states that the media has two reasons for presenting reality to minority groups. First, the media constructs social reality. Second, the media is able to marginalise certain minority groups because of its ability to perpetuate stereotypes. In principle, the philosophy of journalism that emerges through the work of mass media is the daily practice of citizens, and the media content is sourced from citizens (Atton, 2003, p. 1). Based on this statement, minority groups also have a position to speak out in the mass media.

The anxiety over the strong ownership of the media and the diminishing of the public's right to educational information gave birth to the so-called alternative media. According to Aston (2002), the purpose of alternative media is media that criticises the mainstream media where the news coverage process is based on alternative values. Alternative media are agents of society that provide public space and are committed to democratic goals. These alternative media are usually

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owned by certain communities and fight for their interests. Birowo (2004) states that this alternative media is expected to serve the marginalised majority group.

In Indonesia, the emergence of alternative media has also become a concern. Herdiana (2022) stated that in commemoration of World Press Freedom Day 2022, 12 alternative media in Indonesia are committed to guarding democracy in Indonesia. The media are: Project Multatuli, Balebengong, Bandung Bergerak, Bincang Perempuan, Betahita, Ekuatorial, Floresa, Konde, Remotivi, Serat, Sinar Pidie, and Suara Kita. These alternative media have their own specialities from women's issues, environmental issues, in-depth journalism, to citizen involvement. Grijns (in Herliana, 2022) stated that the birth of alternative media in Indonesia occurred when the Indonesian media was concentrated in one owner. This causes the news to be very Jakarta-centric and does not reach areas outside Jakarta. Alternative media in Indonesia is considered capable of accommodating marginalised issues that are ignored by the mainstream media. Alternative media is a space where journalism becomes a part of voicing those who are unable to speak out, which reflects that journalism and humanity are inseparable.(Sepriyani et al., 2019)

One of the alternative media that discusses general issues about minority groups is Project Multatuli. Unlike other alternative media, Project Multatuli does not have a distinctive marginalised issue that it covers. Project Multatuli is a non-profit journalism organisation that emerged around 2021. Project Multatuli takes the initiative to serve the public by raising marginalised voices, neglected communities, and fundamental issues that are set aside (About Us, n.d). Interestingly, Project Multatuli is the first membership-based journalism movement in Indonesia. Nehe (2023) states that this membership base is related to the emphasis on collaboration between media and organisations that believe in the values of democracy, humanity, social justice, earth sustainability, and equal rights. The collaboration in Project Multatuli is called *Kawan M*. From May 2021 to 31 December 2022, Project Multatuli collaborated with 30 civil society organisations including donor agencies. In addition, Project Multatuli collaborates with 20 local, national, regional and international media to publish high-risk coverage (About Us, n.d).

This research will look at how collaborative journalism is carried out by Project Multatuli with a membership system. Heft (2020) stated that collaborative journalism is the journalism of the future. Alfter (2016) states that collaborative journalism is a collaboration of journalists who work on the same issue and publish together, cross-check and merge their findings, do fact

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checking in their region. Ruecket (2021) stated that collaborative journalism is reporting to find the invisible truth. Stonbely (2017) asserts that collaborative journalism is a cooperative arrangement (formal or informal) between two or more news and information organisations, which aims to supplement each organisation's resources and maximise the impact of the content produced.

This research is interesting because the collaboration is not only with news organisations, but also with non-professional media that do not have news organisations. This involvement is a form of public journalism where there is public participation to solve common problems. Dzur (in Parahita, 2017) stated that public journalism listens to public voices in the process of finding news, producing news, and encouraging public dialogue. Public journalism also has the principle of collaboration between citizens and news media for news preparation. This research has a novelty with previous research (Lestari, Abrar, & Haque, 2024; Nehe, 2023) which focuses on the practice of collaborative journalism in a number of local and national news organisations (Lestari, 2024), as well as the practice of citizen journalism in Project Multatuli (Nehe, 2023). This research will try to look at the practice of collaborative journalism between news organisations and news organisations, as well as news organisations and the community in the Kawan M program, as well as public involvement in determining news which is the main characteristic of public journalism.

METHODS

Qualitative research with a case study method is the approach in this research. Yin & Merriam (in Harrison, Birks, Franklin, & Mills, 2017, p.11) state that in a case study a case is selected based on the research objectives, which will provide insight into a problem. According to Harrison, Birks, Franklin, & Mills (2017, p.12), a case study is an appropriate method for a comprehensive, holistic, and in-depth investigation of a complex problem (phenomenon, event, situation, organisation, individual or group programme). According to Creswell (2007), the characteristics of case studies are: 1) The researcher focuses on developing an in-depth description of the case under study, 2) The case is a single case or more than an event or programme, 3) Data collection uses several techniques such as interviews, observations, documents, and artefacts, and 4) Data analysis is based on the development of case descriptions. The **research object in this**

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study is the alternative media Project Multatuli. The subjects of this research are the founder of Project Multatuli, the editorial team of Project Multatuli, and Kawan

M. This research method uses in-depth interview techniques to explore the practice of collaborative journalism in the Kawan M programme. Data triangulation as part of data validity uses source triangulation. Kriyantono (2014) asserts that source triangulation is to double-check the degree of information on different sources. Furthermore, the data analysis in this research is qualitative data analysis. (Rahardjo, in Pramesti, 2022) states that qualitative data analysis is carried out by grouping data, giving codes, and categorising them into parts based on the formulation of the problem. The researcher will then conduct theoretical dialogue by discussing the findings and theories, as well as conclusions.

RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

Project Multatuli's presence since 2021 stems from the *founder's* anxiety at the condition of the media in Indonesia which is centred on individual ownership. This condition is exacerbated by ownership that interferes with the newsroom. Not only that, the information circulating in the community is Jakarta centric, while the portion of local media coverage is very minimal. This causes the public to only get information about Jakarta rather than the conditions that occur in their own area.

Project Multatuli comes from the Latin word for "I suffered a lot". One of the founders, Evi Mariani, stated that Project Multatuli is a public service journalism that initially gives more portion to the public to speak out, such as victims of sex and gender discrimination, the poor and the city, indigenous people, to expose systematic injustice. Project Multatuli is an initiator of alternative media in Indonesia that uses the first *membership* system for company revenue. For Evi, this funding system is considered more free so that the media is not affected by any interests. The reason for the *membership* system is explained by Evi as follows.

"As an alternative media that focuses on the public, we don't want any pressure from anyone. With this system, we have the freedom to cover whatever the public wants, and the public has its own satisfaction that their issues are heard by the wider public." (Evi Maryani, Founder of Project Multatuli, interview, 25 July 2024). (Evi Maryani, Founder of Project

Multatuli, interview, 25 July 2024).

This *membership* system is often called the *crowdfunding* model. Widyaningtyas (2022) stated that this model is an *open donation* concept that allows anyone to donate in order to finance the writing published by *online* media. In Project Multatuli, those who become members are known as *Kawan M*. This model is a new business model in Indonesia and the public can get first-hand experience working with professionals.

Kawan M became one of the collaborators in Project M. Not only *Kawan M*, as many as 20 local media organisations also became collaborators to cover with Project Multatuli. Researchers will look at two collaboration practices between Project Multatuli and *Kawan M*, and Project Multatuli and local media organisations. Project Multatuli's coverage is also funded by donors such as the Open Society Foundation, Yayasan Kurawal, Google News Initiative, and the Media and Development Investment Fund. Cooperation also starts from donor grantee relations and collaborative coverage. Evi Maryani explained that Project Multatuli does not use the *rating* approach as a measure of news success. The success of Project Multatuli's news is measured by: 1) Changing readers' awareness of the issue, 2) Readability of readers, especially in vulnerable groups, 3) Changing the ruler's policy.

Project Multatuli's Collaborative Journalism Practice with Crowdsourcing Model

The practice of collaborative journalism between Project Multatuli and *Kawan M* begins with an issue raised by *Kawan M* to the editor. There are two considerations of issues that will be raised by Project Multatuli, namely voicing minority voices, and overseeing the course of government power. This issue is raised by *members* who come from different professional, gender and religious backgrounds. This issue is presented in editorial meetings every two months. Like any other editorial meeting, Project Multatuli and *Kawan M* will both consider which issues are worth following up. They consider whether this issue has the potential to be raised, the completeness of the sources, and the resulting impact. In the editorial meeting, the issue is determined

Mawa Kresna, Editor of Project Multatuli explained that the news production process in the collaborative practice with *Kawan M* will be accompanied by professional contributors from

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Project Multatuli. These contributors are the ones who will do the reporting and writing. The process of deepening the issue is also carried out by the editorial team which is then brought back in the editorial meeting with Kawan M. The editorial team also collaborates with a team of experts to finalise the issue. In fact, this team of experts can come from Kawan M itself because the expert is part of the *members*. The following is Mawa Kresna's statement regarding this matter.

"Kawan M has the right to express ideas. If their ideas cannot be executed with coverage, we still direct them to write opinions. (Mawa Kresna, Editor, interview, 24 July 2024)

This 3-year collaboration with Kawan M has resulted in several serialised collaborative coverage. So far, in this collaboration, Kawan M has only reached the stage of submitting coverage ideas and assisting the data search process. Furthermore, the coverage will be done by professional journalists from Project Multatuli. However, it does not rule out the possibility, if there are Kawan M who turn out to have a basis in writing, then they can be included in the coverage team, but this policy is based on editorial considerations. Table 2 below shows some of the collaborative coverage.

Table 2 Collaborative coverage between Project Multatuli and Kawan M

Title of coverage	Issue Description
#Generation Burnout series	The dynamics of internships by students in various agencies with all the problems such as work agreements - legal protection, workload, and pocket money issues.
#Education series	Problems in the world of education faced by both public and private schools, both in educators and students. Some of the problems revealed include infrastructure, low wages for honorary teachers, discrimination against women in accessing education, and the trap of gamification in the independent curriculum.
#UnderprivilegedGenZ series	The life of Gen Z is far from what is shown in the mass media. Gen Z lives with various economic problems, from dropping out of school, not being able to afford holidays and shopping, to being a political target during the democratic party...
#Education Should Be Free series	The liberation and commercialisation of higher education has made it difficult for students from poor and middle-class families to cover their tuition debts. A survey related to the difficulty of students paying the single tuition fee (UKT) was conducted with the Alliance for Free Education (APATIS).
Serial # Small Screws	The lives of <i>gig economy</i> workers are vulnerable to exploitation and far from decent conditions. In fact, these workers help large technology companies in Indonesia.
Serial #Teacher Workload	Problems of teachers in Indonesia, especially the condition of honorary teachers in Indonesia

Source: Primary Data (2024)

One of the Kawan M members, Ika Vantiani, stated that in the collaboration process, each

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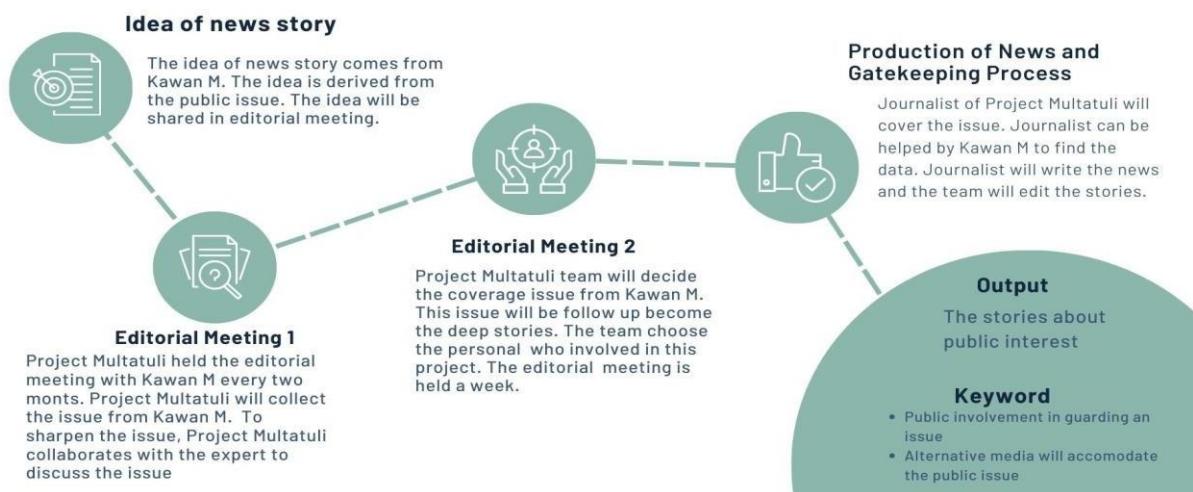
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member has the opportunity to express the public issue in question. Ika also added that Kawan M's contribution is used to work on the proposed public issue. Usually, if there is coverage funded by Kawan M, the editor will inform it. Figure 1 shows that a coverage was funded by Kawan M.

Artikel	Galeri	Serial	Tentang Kami	Jadi Kawan M	EN
<p>Diskriminasi dan tekanan birokratis terhadap guru dari lingkup pemerintah bukanlah hal yang baru. Mulai dari upah hingga pemenuhan kesejahteraan lainnya pun kerap ditepikan dengan berbagai undang-undang yang tumpang tindih. Kesulitan mereka begitu terang namun tak banyak yang memperjuangkan isu-isu itu di kalangan para guru sendiri.</p> <p>“Guru-guru sebentulnya banyak yang nggak berani <i>speak up</i> karena selama ini tuntutannya adalah ‘tanpa tanda jasa’. Jadi kalau bersuara, akan dianggap tabu,” pungkas Asyari.</p> <p><i>Tulisan ini merupakan bagian dari serial laporan #BebanKerjaGuru yang didanai oleh Kawan M.</i></p>					

Figure 1 Example of Coverage Funded by Kawan M

For Ika, Project Multatuli is able to accommodate public unrest that has not been able to be published in the *mainstream* media. Through this collaboration, Kawan M is actually exposed to a diversity of public issues so that they can learn from many issues. Ika emphasised that this collaboration makes there is no distance between the media and its public. Figure 2 explains the practice of collaboration that runs between Project Multatuli and Kawan M.



Picture 1 Collaborative Journalism Between Project Multatuli and Kawan M

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Project Multatuli's Collaborative Journalism Practices with Mainstream Media

Project Multatuli's practice of collaborative journalism with the mainstream media has been going on since this alternative media was present. Collaboration is done with local, national, and international media. Some of the media involved in the collaboration include Bandung Bergerak, Batam News, Batam Pos, Floresa.co, Kompas Daily, Kompas.com, Narasi TV, Tempo, Suara.com, and Tirto.id.

According to Mawa Kresna, this collaboration programme is carried out when editors in various media are interested in working on the same issue. Mawa Kresna explained that this same issue still pays attention to the mission of Project Multatuli, namely 1) raising the issue of vulnerable groups,

2) Before the collaboration is carried out, each editorial team makes an agreement related to their respective duties. The collaboration agreement with local and national media is contained in Table 3 and Table 4 below.

Table 3 Division of Collaboration Coverage Tasks between Project Multatuli and Local Media

Activities	Project Multatuli	Collaborators (Local Media)
Theme proposal	V	V
Data research	V	V
Field coverage	-	V
The editing process	V	V
Writing Output	V	V
Funding	V	-

Source: Primary Data (2024)

Table 4 Division of Collaboration Coverage Tasks Between Project Multatuli and National Media

Activities	Project Multatuli	Collaborator (National Media)
Theme proposal	V	V
Data research	V	V
Field coverage	V	V
The editing process	V	V
Writing Output	V	V
Funding	V	V

Source: Primary Data (2024)

Based on the two tables above, there are striking differences, especially in the field coverage and funding sections. Collaborative coverage with local media is carried out by collaborators due to issues of proximity to the issue as well as the efficiency of the coverage budget.

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In this collaboration, Project Multatuli provides funding for local media considering that local media have funding problems. Meanwhile, collaboration with national media allows all aspects of collaboration activities to be carried out together. Table 5 is an example of collaborative coverage with mainstream media.

Table 5 Collaborative Coverage Between Project Multatuli and Mainstream Media

Title of coverage	Issue Description	Collaborators
Afif's Death and History of Torture to Extrajudicial Killing by Police in West Sumatera	Violence by authorities in West Sumatra that left a 13-year-old teenager named Afif Maulana dead	Langgam.id
Road Project Patgulipat in Lampung	The problem of badly damaged roads in Lampung	Suara.com, Narasi TV, Independen.id, Konsentris.id, and Jaring.id
Irregularities and Alleged Engineering in the Arrest and Death of a Meth Dealer by the Police in Aceh	Aceh police's bizarre death of a meth dealer	Sinar Pidie
Baar community in Flores defends custom to conserve 'Komodo brothers'	Komodo dragon conservation in Flores due to the threat of illegal trade in clay animals, extractive industries, and environmental and climate change.	Floresa
Officials' "Neutral" Stance Doesn't Protect Tobacco Farmers, #Serial TobaccoDeadlock	Problems of tobacco farmers	Serat.id
Looking at Stunting Cases in Dense Settlements in Bandung After the Covid-19 Pandemic	The problem of stunting in Indonesia that is still not resolved	Bandung Moves

Source: Primary Data (2024)

Based on the table above, collaborative coverage raises many public issues in the social, environmental, economic and political fields. According to Kresna, collaborative coverage has its own challenges. One of the challenges is *newsroom* differences, especially in media editorial policies, such as writing style to article airtime and potential threats. Another thing that is most visible is the capacity of the journalists, especially when collaborating with local media. Meanwhile, when collaborating with national media, the tendency is for national media to be more stable in terms of funding, and the capacity of journalists is equal. This is conveyed in this quote.

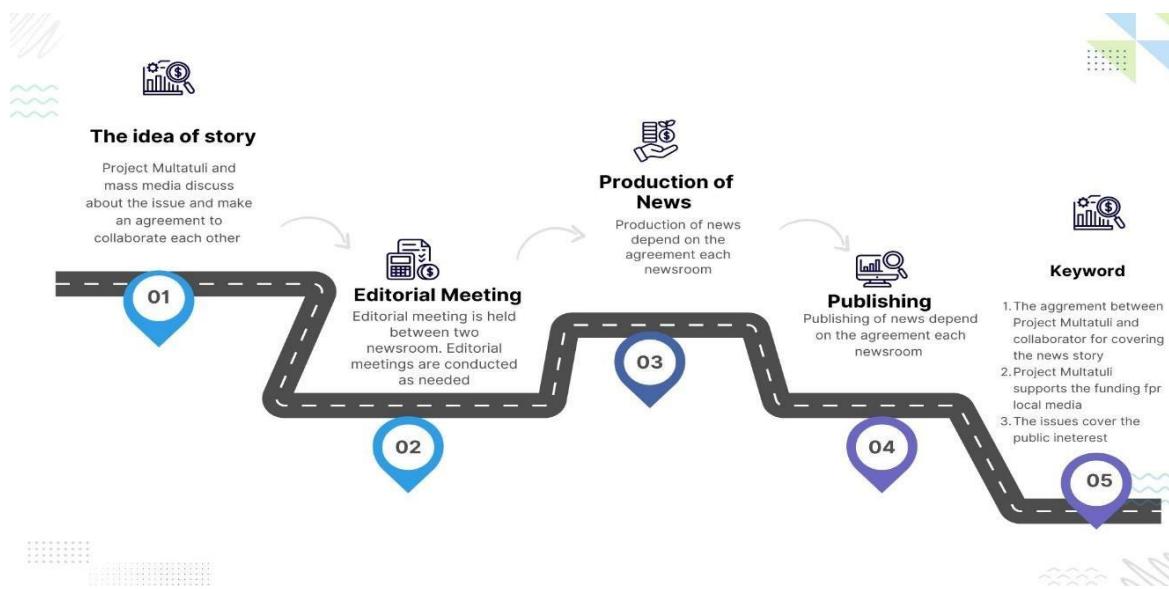
"We once collaborated with one of the local media. When the script was finished and we read it, it was very different from our *style*. Therefore, we decided to do the editing. In a collaboration agreement, we are more flexible. (Mawa Kresna, Editor, interview, 24 July 2024)

On the other hand, this collaborative coverage also has its advantages. According to Mawa

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Kresna, the advantages include: 1) coverage of local vulnerable issues that are rarely published in the mass media, 2) wider readership on this issue, 3) wider impact of the writing, 4) support funding for local media, and 5) efficiency of coverage costs. Meanwhile, another benefit of collaboration is the support for Project Multatuli if it is affected by digital attacks. Project Multatuli has a republication system, where their writing can be freely published by other media. Thanks to this republication system, the news that appears can still be read by the public. Figure 2 shows the practice of Project Multatuli's collaboration with mainstream media.



Picture 2 Collaborative Journalism Between Project Multatuli and Mainstream Media
(Source: Primary Data)

Alternative media, a medium for the public

The presence of Project Multatuli as an alternative media in Indonesia symbolises how alternative media can be a solution to problems in society. Based on its mission as a public journalism movement, Project Multatuli consistently prioritises the issues of vulnerable groups and power watchdogs. Based on the data findings, the issues written about are more concerned with issues of community injustice, indigenous peoples, environmental issues, and gender inequality. These important issues actually get a weak portion in the mainstream mass media. This is because the mass media in Indonesia tend to pay attention to the sensational aspects of the issues raised. Consistency in the loading of marginalised issues proves that alternative media still carries

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the basic purpose of journalism, namely the welfare of the community, especially minorities. Not only that, alternative media also carries the principle of democracy where information comes from and for the public.

The nature of alternative media responsibility is promoted by Project Multatuli. This is in accordance with Haas's (2004) statement where alternative media is a representation of the public that helps advocacy and political change. The issues published are issues that criticise the mainstream media because the coverage process is based on alternative values (Aston, 2022). This alternative value is understood as the value of joint support between Project Multatuli and Kawan M to solve public problems for democratic purposes. This alternative value encourages the realisation of public journalism in Indonesia. Public journalism is understood as a journalism movement that comes from the public and not from professionals. According to (Parahita, 2017), the characteristics of public journalism include: 1) Viewing the audience as citizens, 2) Basic and complex public issues, 3) Collaboration of journalists and citizens, and 4) Transparency and Accountability. These characteristics of public journalism are implemented by Project Multatuli in the practice of collaboration with Kawan M. In practice, Kawan M can freely raise issues in the media that they have not been able to do through the mass media. Kawan M is seen as a public that has the right to express their opinions, especially about issues and public policies that are far from sensationalism and irrationality. The involvement of Kawan M in editorial meetings as a carrier of coverage ideas is proof that in public journalism there is collaboration between the media and the public. Furthermore, the impact of the news can also be felt by the affected public directly, and have an impact on policy changes. Based on the data findings, policy changes occur after the news is published. This proves that the public also has the power to change ruling policies through alternative media channels.

The impact of Project Multatuli's public journalism movement can also be felt by the public directly. Some of the visible impacts of Project Multatuli's journalism work include: 1) Highlighting the issue of marginality in its coverage and this issue becomes the main news value in its journalistic work, 2) Active participation of the public which eventually encourages the public to continue to speak out and be involved in journalism activities, 3) Increased public awareness of the issue, 4) Equal access to information for vulnerable groups in particular, 4) Policy changes by the authorities from the news published.

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To support this public journalism movement, Project Multatuli as an alternative media, chooses to use public and donor funding with the aim of no pressure from any party. In the work of journalism at Project Multatuli, the public or Kawan M also pays membership fees, and the money is used as funding for coverage. Kawan M has the right to participate in editorial meetings every 2 months and they propose ideas for coverage. The editorial system is not under pressure because the ideas, funding and impact are from and for the public. News *output* is ultimately not based on *rating* calculations, but on increasing public awareness and knowledge of the problems that afflict them.

Project Multatuli's Collaborative Journalism with Kawan M

The collaborative practice of Project Multatuli and Kawan M is different from collaborative journalism in general. This collaborative practice is carried out by journalists and non-journalists. The trend of collaboration is increasingly widespread for various reasons such as the affordability of local issues, wider dissemination of information, and efficiency of funds. Collaborative journalism run by Project Multatuli is known as *crowdsourcing journalism*.

This *crowdsourcing* model in alternative media is also called self-managed, or non-hierarchical, or collectivist-democratic (Downing, Atton, Hochheimer (in Haas, 2004). This model has an impact on the production of news by the people who are the target of the news (Haas, 2004). This form of organisation was adopted by Project Multatuli which eventually led the public to directly participate in the news production process. This direct participation is done consciously and not forced because it is based on individual concerns about a public issue. This form of organisation encourages the public to actively participate in the production of journalism content. The public also becomes partners of alternative media in carrying out the mission of public journalism. This collaboration model strengthens participatory journalism and citizen journalism. Participatory journalism relates to readers participating in journalistic activities, namely as comments or content producers. Meanwhile, citizen journalism relates to non-professional citizens who actively produce content. (Aitamurto, 2019).

Crowdsourced journalism also strengthens the relationship between the media and the public, and creates a space for collaboration. According to Aitamurto (2019, p.13), there is a concept called *co-creation*, which means a dialogical and dynamic process in which journalists interact with the crowd *online*. This *co-creation* process allows journalists to gain new knowledge

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about topics that occur in society.

This type of collaboration model brings its own challenges. In terms of actors, this collaboration is carried out between professional journalists and non-journalists. In fact, journalism products must be done professionally because news is consumed by the public at large and is expected to change policies in favour of the public. In the context of this collaboration, there is a need to understand that journalism work is not a perfunctory work because it goes through a long and rigorous process. Important principles such as accuracy, verification, and objectivity need to be practised to get quality journalistic products. Even beyond practice-based principles, ethical principles also need to be applied by journalists.

Collaboration with a *crowdsourcing* model requires the editor to know very well which public (who) will be invited to be fully involved in the news production process. Project Multatuli seems to understand that Kawan M comes from different professional backgrounds with different levels of ability to understand issues. Therefore, Kawan M is only involved in the process of proposing ideas. While the process of idea maturation, reporting, and writing is held by the editorial team of Project Multatuli. In certain *cases*, Kawan M can be invited to cover or write when they have background skills like journalists.

This collaboration model also cannot set a target for the coverage that will be carried out. Data findings show that in a year, collaboration with Kawan M is only about 3-4 coverage themes. This is due to limited coverage resources. This type of collaboration model proves that ideas from Kawan M can be very abundant, but the execution of coverage needs to consider many factors. Therefore, the data findings also prove that Project Multatuli accommodates their ideas in the opinion channel.

Project Multatuli's Collaborative Journalism with Mainstream Media

According to Stonbely (2017, p.14), collaborative journalism is a cooperative agreement (formal or informal) between two or more news organisations, which aims to supplement each organisation's resources and maximise the impact of the content produced. Furthermore, according to Jenkins & Graves (2019, p.12), collaboration in the context of journalism is sharing resources, identifying benefits between collaborating parties, bringing together diverse opinions, using the same methods, and agreeing to a common mission and goal. Collaborative journalism also provides access to new ideas, capabilities, and tools that may not exist in the *newsroom*.

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The data findings prove that in collaborative journalism, Project Multatuli chooses local and national media that have the same goal in solving public issues. This is the main factor that measures the success of collaboration in addition to quality journalism output (Stonbely, 2017). This can be seen in the issues covered in the collaboration, namely the issue of marginality which is the focus of Project Multatuli.

Furthermore, the common goal of the collaborators makes it easier to make agreements between different *newsrooms*. The ease of agreement is also realised because this collaboration is carried out by media professionals. The agreement also resulted in the division of tasks to be carried out by each *newsroom*. The research data shows that there are different agreements between local media and national media.

Project Multatuli's collaborative journalism practice has a collaboration model in one-time projects, namely 1) partners create content separately and share it (temporary and separate) 2) partners work together to create content (temporary and co-creating), and 3) partners share content/data/resources at the organisation (temporary and integrated) (Stonbely, 2017). These collaboration models are agreed upon by agreement. The first model is usually done in the first collaboration and refers to different *newsroom* cultures, different levels of expertise, managing unequal power dynamics, and internal buy-in. This first model does not allow for sharing the burden of the data. The second model is done when referring to differences in newsroom culture and internal buy-in but has the potential to share the burden with the big data, gain skills/expertise missing in the newsroom, and greater reach. The third model refers to newsroom differences that allow for gain skills/expertise missing in newsroom, share burden with big data, greater reach, exposure to different techniques, and product/outcome is better than possible alone. Based on the research data, the use of this model depends on the capacity of the collaborators.

Furthermore, the practice of collaboration with mainstream media has many advantages. The data findings show that collaboration is able to maximise resources, uniting participants with diverse expertise, exchanging data so that the content is stronger, and the impact of the writing is wider. The goal of alternative media can truly fulfil its purpose to tell the stories of those who are marginalised. Journalism cannot be separated from the human side, which means that the ideal can be realised through such collaboration

However, a number of challenges are also noted in this collaboration practice. Each *newsroom* has

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its own dynamics. These dynamics include differences in the capacity of journalists, especially in terms of journalism techniques, the team in charge of coverage, coverage funding, media editorial policies, and threats that ultimately involve two or more *newsrooms*.

In addition to these newsroom dynamics, each collaborator also needs to build trust between working teams, not think about competition between newsrooms (ready to share data), increase commitment to complete the project with the obstacles encountered, as well as the economic problems of each media. These dynamics are discussed in repeated editorial meetings to equalise perceptions. The research data also shows that local media collaboration does show its own challenges compared to national media. The issue of resources and their capacity as well as funding are the main challenges in this collaboration. Meanwhile, Project Multatuli as an alternative media chooses to support coverage funds even though it itself is also based on public/donor funding.

Meanwhile, the issue of threats, especially from the authorities, also emerged in the data findings. Coverage of vulnerable and marginalised issues by alternative media is still considered taboo and dangerous by the authorities. This is why alternative media are often more threatened than media that choose general issues. The commitment to continue to fight for the issue of marginality is stronger when collaboration is carried out continuously. Through collaboration, alternative media get support for many things, including security issues. Through collaboration, a feeling of "mutual" support and strengthening between media is formed. This minimises threats to alternative media and maximises solutions to threats that occur.

CONCLUSION

Project Multatuli, an alternative media in Indonesia, is committed to continuing to promote issues of marginality and power watchdogs. This commitment is realised through its journalistic works that prioritise issues of marginality. This commitment is also proven by public/donor funding in its journalism activities. This funding has an impact on Project Multatuli's freedom to raise the issue of marginality.

The existence of Project Multatuli as an alternative media is also strengthened in the practice of collaborative journalism. The practice of collaborative journalism carried out by Project Multatuli is divided into two forms of collaboration, namely crowdsourced journalism and collaborative journalism with the mainstream media. The crowdsourced journalism model involves

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Kawan M as a partner in the news production process. In this collaboration, Kawan M is responsible for funding coverage and proposing news ideas. This model is also the first collaboration model in Indonesia. This collaborative practice is a manifestation of public journalism in Indonesia. Public journalism itself means involving the public in journalism activities and providing space for them to be dynamic together with the mass media. The challenge of this model is also very striking in terms of the actors, namely professionals and non-professionals. This certainly brings differences in knowledge and expertise in journalism activities. In fact, journalism products are information consumed by the public and are expected to bring about changes in society. Therefore, in crowdsourced journalism, Kawan M's involvement is only limited to proposing ideas. Meanwhile the process of determining themes, executing coverage, writing, and editing is in the hands of the editor. In this model, the editorial team cannot set coverage targets because the editorial team also has its own coverage agenda, and lack of resources.

The second practice of collaborative journalism is collaboration with the mainstream media. This collaboration tends to be different from the previous one because it is carried out by media professionals. Because the perpetrators come from professionals, journalism techniques are not problematic. Collaboration coverage with the mass media is carried out with media that have the same goal of raising issues of marginality. Collaboration is also based on an agreement between two or more newsrooms both from the division of coverage, writing, editing, output, to funding. This collaboration brings many benefits, namely maximising resources, uniting participants with diverse expertise, exchanging data so that the content is stronger, and the impact of the writing is wider. Meanwhile, there are also challenges that come with it, namely how to build trust between newsrooms, commitment to sharing data and completing projects, and funding. The output of the writing is also expected to be the same between newsrooms to further strengthen advocacy on cases of marginalisation.

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