The past decade has not been a good one for corporate news media. Pew’s annual [State of the News Media](http://www.journalism.org/2016/06/15/state-of-the-news-media-2016/) sums it up best: “The latest newspaper newsroom employment figures (from 2014) show 10% declines, greater than in any year since 2009, leaving a workforce that is 20,000 positions smaller than 20 years prior. And the cuts keep coming.” Even TV news is getting hit, with one-in-seven Americans cutting their cable TV cord. Over 62% of U.S. adults now get their news from social media, which means the dollars go to Facebook rather than news providers.

Yet, in this environment, mission-driven independent news outlets like those in the Media Consortium remain stable and continue to produce amazing stories like those that won our [2016 Impact Awards](https://www.themediaconsortium.org/2016/04/12/tmc-impact-awards-2016/). The main reason for our sector’s well-being is that their revenues derive directly from their users rather than from advertisers. Our media have also been supported by a new collaborative energy that has enabled them to engage communities and make impact beyond core audience.

From 2015-2016 the Media Consortium organized 35 editorial collaborations by 36 different outlets covering six different topic areas: climate change, immigration reform, education, reproductive justice, economic inequality and racial justice. Produced according to a strict research protocol designed by Harvard Professor Gary King, these collaborations proved that content co-published by independent outlets working together has a statistically more significant impact on public sentiment than content produced by any single outlet—even a mass media outlet.

Drawing on this information, the Media Consortium has doubled down on collaborative work. Because of the generous unrestricted support provided by the Wallace Global Fund, we were able to organize 24 outlets to pool reporting at the RNC and DNC. And with Wallace Global Fund support we are implementing a cloud-based member database that will allow our members to easily partner with each other. That database will go live in November, followed by a new website in January that will showcase the work of these partnerships.

Now that we have proof that collaborations can drive public sentiment, we are ready to harness those collaborations to make meaningful social change. In 2016-2017, our members asked us to focus on the surge in nativism and xenophobia we have seen in the 2016 political campaign. In 2016, accordingly, we have focused our efforts on immigration reporting under the tag, #WhoCounts?

In September and October of this year, the Media Consortium will be holding #WhoCounts community media fora on immigration, bringing together community/ethnic media, grassroots experts and independent news outlets to partner together to ensure immigrants have full access to voting rights. But we will not stop with the election. In 2017, we will launch two related projects: Muslims in America, a project educating reporters on Muslim culture and religion, and Childhood Detained, a project focusing on children in detention facilities. We hope to work with Gary King’s team on these projects to continue to measure and quantify the impact our collaborative reporting has on public sentiment around immigrants.

As we researched the surge in nativism, however, we came to realize that the anti-immigrant anger could not be separated from a real concern about the economy, a concern voiced on the left as well as the right. So, in addition to our immigration projects, we are launching a solutions-based project looking at the economy. Just Transitions will teach reporters the terminology of the new financial system while providing them with specific collaborative story projects.

These projects are all specifically designed to encourage our outlets to engage with the communities in which and on which they report. We believe that the effect on public sentiment we have already seen by collaborative partnerships between our members will only increase when our members engage in a deep way with community media and the communities they directly represent.

As we wrote in our 2016 proposal, we strongly believe that this kind of horizontally integrated network is the future of news. Listening to and engaging with communities will deepen reporting while bringing new readers, viewers and potentially donors to independent media. It’s also the right thing to do. As we have written in our longer narrative, the Black Lives Matter movement has demonstrated that media can not and should not be distanced from the majority of the population that we cover. To be the best journalists we can be, we must reflect and be engaged with all the communities we cover.

Facebook is a walled corporate garden. It is not the future of news.

The future of news is Nicole Lee, the Executive Director of the Urban Peace Movement, [writing for RPE](http://www.reimaginerpe.org/20-1/lee) on how young people of color are using the knowledge they gain on the streets to transform our economy and culture.

It’s Adeshina Emmanuel, an Ida B. Wells Fellow at the Nation Institute, providing an in-depth analysis and explainer of police officer bill of rights laws for [In These Times](http://inthesetimes.com/article/19284/after-killings-of-alton-sterling-and-philando-castile-the-system-punishes-p) that started from DeRay McKesson’s suggestion that the police were provoking Baton Rouge protesters.

And it’s the kind of [partnership created at the DNC](https://phillycam.org/blog/phillycam-dnc-recap) when Phillycam, the public access station in Philadelphia, graciously hosted Media Consortium members Democracy Now! and Free Speech TV, creating five days of live programming picked up by hundreds of other stations.

All these stories and more are collected the [Media Consortium website](http://www.tmcincolor.org/). It’s the start of a new era of collaborative, networked reporting that suits a movement-building age.