

# NEW NEWS, SUPER NEWS

BY GINA LEVY

The media is by far one of the most powerful and influential industries in the world. However, if one looks at mainstream media as a mirror that reflects a bias towards despair and then simultaneously shapes it, one can see that it does not primarily sell news but negative emotion which sells far more papers than news does.

According to author David Bornstein (2004), “There are more people doing good in the world than there are terrorists, but you wouldn’t know it from reading the newspaper or watching the news.”<sup>1</sup> So when we feed on news which portrays violence and corruption as normal – even desirable – human behaviour, we glorify it and become addicted to it, generating a fearful, reactive and disempowered society.

With the advent of 24 hour news, shrinking lead times, cost cutting and an increasing demand for content, media publications increasingly turn to the four major news wires (which contribute 90% of international news) to source content.

Foreign media are also poorly represented in Africa with just a handful of correspondents covering a vast and complex continent, resulting in limited and superficial coverage.

So the *same* (biased) views and opinions can therefore appear in thousands of media publications – including local papers, further perpetuating a negative perception.

Lastly, as technology gains momentum, mainstream

media is starting to lose once loyal audiences to online platforms. There is also a growing demand for more balanced news as more people are becoming increasingly selective about what they read, hear and watch.

Only when we recognise our own insanity, do we become aware of how we can change it. So, what if we created an alternative to the news as we know it? A new idea, a new possibility, a *new* news agenda.

News that helps change the world’s perception of Africa as a war-torn, corrupt, diseased, uneducated and poor continent into a place of innovation, opportunity, and contribution. News that raises our expectations of ourselves and South Africa and gives us *hope*.

Introducing... Supernews ([www.supernews.co.za](http://www.supernews.co.za)), a “citizen-generated news and idea network”. Supernews is harnessing the power of the crowd as both its source of information and the force behind its organisation.

**In other words, it’s** democratising the news-making environment by transforming passive recipients of news into active participants in the news.

Supernews is inviting citizens from every corner of South Africa to help change the news agenda by giving them a multi-media megaphone to write or record their own futures, whether they’re CEOs or car-pool moms, because no-one needs to own a TV channel or a newspaper to have their say or share their story – all they need is a cellphone, a digital camera or a keyboard.

This makes it really different from the way

traditional news is made and distributed, giving Supernews a presence where mainstream media lacks one, and making the potential for sourcing and gathering original, user-generated news-content infinite.

Supernews is also crowd-sourcing the next socially-impactful innovations from the collective imagination of the student public (Super Stage) in order to solve South African challenges, thereby helping to shape a new reality by both creating and reporting ideas and solutions that become the news.

The more the public understands that the forces influencing their future are within their control, and the more they see themselves as having a voice, the more inspired they are to get involved.

And the more their involvement gets noticed, the greater their realisation that they can make South Africa work better.

And maybe, just maybe, together, we’ll trigger a news revolution and wake up to headlines that create a South Africa and an Africa the whole world is inspired by. Now that’s Supernews.

See videos: <http://www.supernews.co.za/about/about/>

## Endnotes

1. Bornstein, D. 2004. *How to Change the World: Social Entrepreneurs and the Power of New Ideas*. New York; Oxford University Press