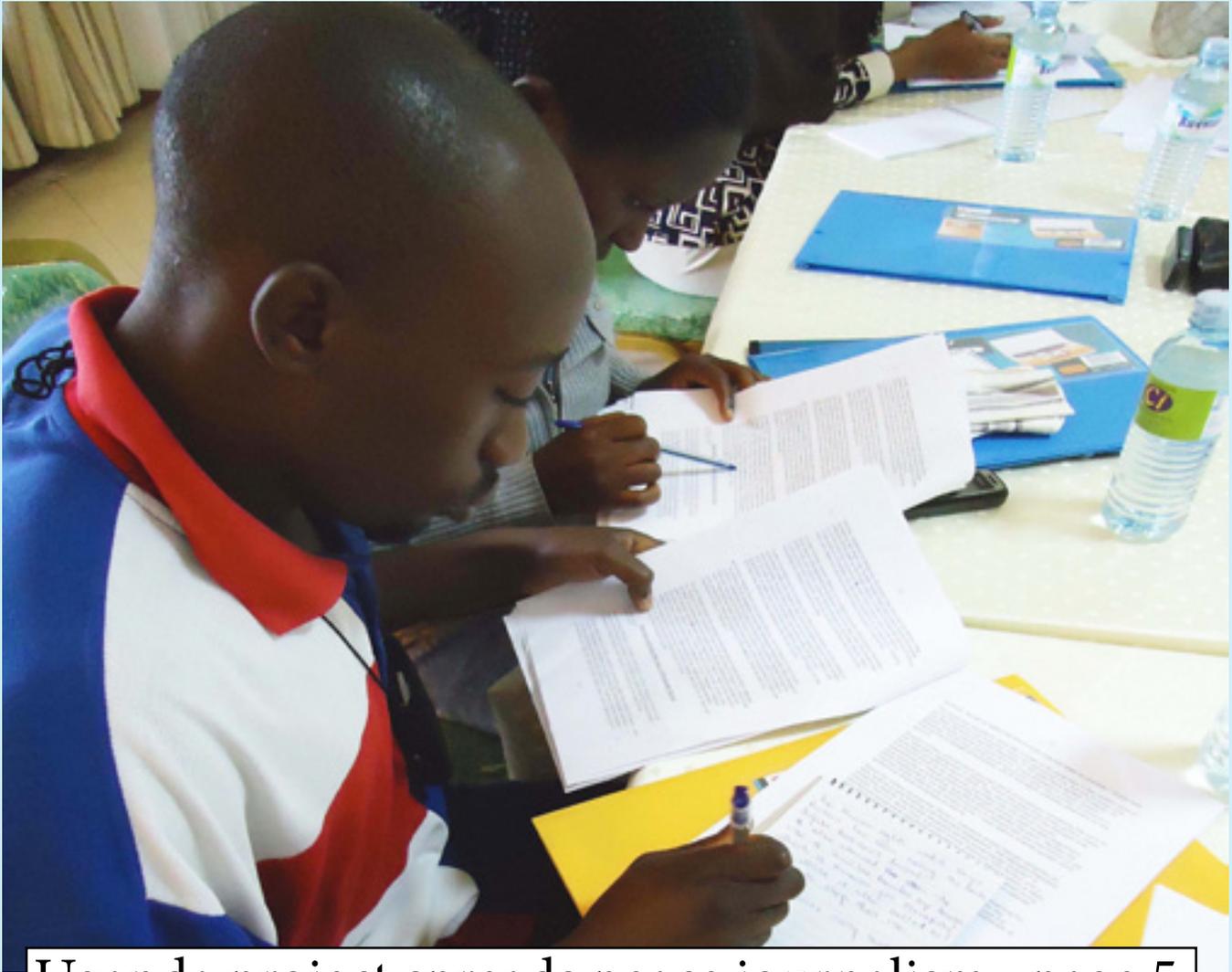


The Peace Journalist

A publication of the Center for Global Peace Journalism at Park University

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The Peace Journalist

The Peace Journalist is a semi-annual publication of the Center for Global Peace Journalism at Park University in Parkville, Missouri.

The Peace Journalist is dedicated to disseminating news and information for and about teachers, students, and practitioners of peace and conflict sensitive journalism.

Submissions are welcome from all. We are seeking shorter submissions (300-500 words) detailing peace journalism projects, classes, proposals, etc. We also welcome longer submissions (800-1200 words) about peace or conflict sensitive journalism projects or programs, as well as academic works from the field.

Editor: Steven Youngblood, Director, Center for Global Peace Journalism
Park University.

Editorial Advice:
John Lofflin, Park University

Contact:
steve.youngblood@park.edu
Center for Global Peace Journalism, Park University

What is Peace Journalism?

Peace Journalism is when editors and reporters make choices that improve the prospects for peace. These choices, including how to frame stories and carefully choosing which words are used, create an atmosphere conducive to peace and supportive of peace initiatives and peacemakers, without compromising the basic principles of good journalism. (Adapted from Lynch/McGoldrick, *Peace Journalism*). Peace Journalism gives peacemakers a voice while making peace initiatives and non-violent solutions more visible and viable.

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Gandhi: The original peace journalist

By Abhilash Chandran

The true function of journalism is to educate the public mind, not to stock the public mind with wanted and unwanted impressions. A journalist has therefore to use his discretion as to what to report and when. As it is, journalists are not content to stick to facts alone. Journalism has become the art of intelligent anticipation of events.

-Mahatma Gandhi-

Apart from being a national leader and social reformer, Mahatma Gandhi was a great communicator. More than anyone else, he recognized that communication is the most effective tool to shape opinion and mobilize popular support. Gandhi was a strong believer in the power of the word and wrote very cautiously in his newspapers to mobilize public opinion. The subjects he chose to write on were varied and variegated, which depicted his honesty, integrity and in-depth understanding.

Gandhian journalism emerged from the values and philosophy practiced and propagated by Mahatma Gandhi in his life and through his publications viz., Indian opinion, Harijan and Young India. With courage of conviction, Gandhi applied the principles of honesty and integrity in his real life and also in journalism. He could bravely write his quest for truth or experiments with truth while boldly facing the poignant situations to achieve his goals. Essentially, he believed that newspapers should have values when they are launched with a view to serving people.

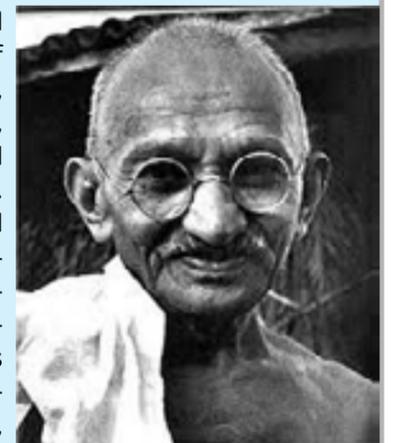
Gandhian journalism

Gandhian journalism was a product of Gandhi's approach to life, his concern for humanity and his deep commitment to the poor for whose sake he fought for national independence. It was essentially the journalism of communitarianism and humanitarianism. He had certain noble

Abhilash Chandran is the M.Phil Scholar of Gandhian Studies at the School of Gandhian Thought And Development Studies, Mahatma Gandhi University, Priyadarshiny Hills Kottayam in Kerala, India.



goals that were based on his philosophy of non-violence (ahimsa), self reliance (swadeshi), self rule (swaraj), and truth-force (satyagraha). All these were reflected in his journalistic writings and oral communications, and his non-verbal communications such as his innumerable journeys on foot, padayatras, within India, mediation, fasting and prayer meetings.¹



Gandhi's journals never had any sensational topics. He wrote on constructive work, satyagraha, nonviolence, diet, nature-cure, Hindu-Muslim unity, untouchability, spinning, khadi, swadeshi, village industries and prohibition. He stressed the need of re-orientation of education and food habits and was a severe critic of national defects.²

PJ in India

Gandhi's insights and understanding of the necessity of the media and communication led him to have movement's own news and views publication and that is how the Indian opinion seems to have been born. Gandhi has devoted a separate chapter both in his autobiography and his book on satyagraha in South Africa. Both the chapters contain details on how to why and how to publish a paper. The content of the chapters is enough to pass Gandhi as a professional and committed journalist. He has in these chapters described difficulties of publishing news magazines and managing it including the advertisement and finance aspects. Thus, it is useful both for journalists and publishers even in the present times.³

It was Gandhi's firm belief that the newspaper was meant for "selfless service" and that it should not be used as a commercial enterprise to amass profits. Despite financial strains, he chose to turn down advertisements as it could compromise the focal purpose of the paper. Instead, he devised unconventional modes to sell his paper and expanded the subscription to sustain his paper.

Media can promote religious tolerance

by Ghassan Michel Rubeiz

Palm Beach Gardens, Florida - Much of the debate about the recent burning of the Qur'an in a Florida church by Pastor Terry Jones focused on its devastating impact overseas. But beyond the power of symbolic actions to stir up religious tensions, this event also demonstrated the degree to which new technologies can speed up the dissemination of hate messages in our ever-shrinking global village.

The proliferation of new media has a potentially very positive or negative impact on relations between ethnic and religious groups. Online social network sites like Twitter, YouTube and Facebook, as well as global satellite stations, have facilitated the instant spread of news. The Qur'an burning, for example, was initially reported on YouTube and spread through television satellites on repetitive display.

We all know that bad news spreads



Dr. Ghassan Rubeiz

(grubeiz@comcast.net) is an Arab American commentator on issues of development, peace and justice. She is the former Middle East Secretary of the Geneva-based World Council of Churches. This article was written for the Common Ground News Service (CGNews).

much faster than good news. Acts of hate broadcast over and over again can have devastating consequences for relations between communities, as the events in Afghanistan following Jones' despicable act demonstrate.

But what can be done to counter the negative impact of new media? How can we harness the power of new media to communicate actions and words that promote understanding, tolerance and compassion?

There are three categories where action can be taken: wider dissemination of inter-religious news that reflect compassion and understanding, advocacy for responsible use of the air waves, and monitoring of the media.

For the first category – how do we convince the media to redress the imbalance and bring in more “good news” stories? One possibility is to seek those stories that contain elements of suspense, courage and sacrifice. Events revealing how, say, a Muslim saved the life of a Jew during a crime, or how a Jewish boy saved an elderly Muslim woman in a hurricane, could be brought to the attention of television producers and creators of new media content.

Yet, even less dramatic events may be of interest. For example, a recent visit by a group from our Florida church to a mosque countered, albeit in a small way, what had happened in Jones' Gainesville church, only three hours away. Our group engaged in a conversation with the imam. The particular experience of learning and the bonding generated through personal contact cannot be conveyed simply through preaching tolerance. The face-to-face meeting between our communities broke down barriers.

Such personal stories may not be of interest to the large television networks, but we could harness the availability of self-made media online to share our interfaith message and stimulate similar events.

The second category of action – advocacy for a free and fair media – is already emerging. Advocates educate people about the rights of local communities to have a say in radio or television programming. The dominance of the press is worldwide and corrective action is needed at the global level, perhaps region by region.

In the United States, Sue Wilson – a California-based film-maker and an advocate for a free and honest media – lobbies national officials for better legislation, shames fear-mongering pundits and mobilises local communities.

I heard Wilson speak passionately about media ownership last month after a screening of her film, *Broadcast Blues*. Wilson believes that people should own their local airwaves. She pleads: save your local newspaper, radio and television station from corporate ownership that is consolidated, autocratic, alarming and self-serving.

Yet new legislation and social action cannot, in and of themselves, tame the mainstream media. Regulation and monitoring of the media for religious diversity could add an important dimension of professional discipline. Such monitoring should be a global endeavour since the problem is not limited to the United States.

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Religion

Center for Global Peace Journalism at Park University

The Global Peace Journalism Center is a resource for Park University students (courses, seminars, service and service learning opportunities, research, study abroad, opportunities for publication of articles), Park faculty (publication opportunities, research, travel, international collaboration), high school journalists (seminars, contests), professional journalists worldwide (seminars, resource materials, website, collaboration), and like-minded organizations (collaborative projects/initiatives, research).



Initiatives:

1. A peace media and counterterrorism program launched in Dec., 2011. The project is bringing together media and security officials in Uganda to establish frameworks of cooperation on anti-terrorism efforts. It is funded with a \$150,000 State Dept. grant.
2. Peace and Electoral Journalism project, Kenya, June-July, 2012. Details pending. Trainings will target journalists at risk for inciting election related violence.
3. “People Building Peace 2.0”--A story about the Uganda PJ project is featured in the book “People Building Peace 2.0”. The Uganda story by was selected for the book as part of a “Stories of Peace” contest sponsored by the Peace Portal.



Left-Mackay hall, Park University

MISSION: The Center for Global Peace Journalism at Park University promotes the concepts of peace and peace journalism, including advocating non-violent conflict resolution, through seminars and courses both in the U.S. and abroad, through its website and magazine, and through partnerships with like-minded organizations and individuals.

Contact:

Steven Youngblood
steve.youngblood@park.edu

Website

www.park.edu/peacecenter

Religion from Pg 4

The Washington-based Center for Religious Freedom annually compares countries on tolerance for religious diversity. Could we dream of creating an international body for rating the media on respect for cultural and religious diversity?

If we cannot stop religious bias in the media, we can dilute it with positive stories that demonstrate inter-religious understanding. Tolerant and diversity-based religious education can generate compelling stories. Challenging media standards and advocating socially responsible journalism – both within the main networks and in online forums – could allow for a greater balance in reporting. And creating significant institutions for monitoring the media would create greater pressure on editors, producers and reporters to disseminate content that gives us hope.

Uganda PJ project discourages violence

By Steven Youngblood

This is great, but it's not enough.

As I taught Peace Journalism in Uganda for five weeks in 2009, I kept hearing this mantra. The journalists in my seminars said they liked and needed what I was teaching. However, the radio reporters and manager attendees emphasized that Uganda needed many more peace journalism lessons as the 2011 elections approached.

At the urging of the journalists, we put together a proposal for a comprehensive Peace, Development, and Electoral Journalism project for 2010-2011 in Uganda.

If approved, the project would require that I teach radio journalists to understand and practice Peace Journalism, a term developed by journalists Johan Galtung, Annabeth McGoldrick and Jake Lynch. I define Peace Journalism as when editors and reporters make choices that improve the prospects for peace. These choices promote the positive development of societies recovering from conflict while they create an atmosphere supportive of peace initiatives and peacemakers and conducive to reconciliation. For the radio journalists, PJ means, among other things, avoiding the use of inflammatory, inciting language.

Our project, consisting of three major parts, was pitched to the U.S. Embassy-Kampala and USAID, and approved shortly thereafter. The \$270,000 effort consisted of holding 30 seminars across Uganda for radio journalists and managers, launching a Public Service Announcement campaign with a "no election violence" message, and organizing Peace Clubs, groups of Ugandans working with media to ensure a violence-free election.

The principal goal of the Peace, Development, and Electoral Journalism project was to prevent media induced or exacerbated violence during the 2011 election cycle.

The project was needed because of a legacy of violent elections (Kenya, Ivory Coast, Zimbabwe) and of hate radio in sub-Saharan Africa. Hate radio, the use of the airwaves to encourage sectarianism and/or violence, was used as a destructive tool during the Rwandan genocide (1994), during post-election unrest in Kenya (2007-8), and even during riots in Kampala (2009). Many believed this volatile mix of campaign/electoral turmoil and hate radio, combined with the fact that Uganda is still recovering from a 20-year civil war, made the 2011 election a potentially dangerous one. It was against this backdrop that the PJ project began.

PJ in Uganda

was against this backdrop that the PJ project began.

The project, which ran from February 2010 to April 2011, was highlighted by 30 seminars, 25 for journalists and the remainder for radio station managers.

At the journalist's seminars, we discussed the basics of peace journalism (frame stories to discourage violence, give peacemakers and everyday people a voice, avoid inflammatory language). The radio reporters also produced peace-themed radio reports and PSA's which aired on their local stations. The seminars were held

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Steven Youngblood (center) is director of the Center for Global Peace Journalism at Park University in Parkville, Missouri USA. He directed the Peace, Electoral, and Developmental Journalism project in Uganda (2010-11). Youngblood is a two-time J. William Fulbright Scholar (Moldova 2001 and Azerbaijan 2007). He has taught in 12 countries for the U.S. State Department, UNICEF, USAID, and People to People International. Youngblood is an associate professor of communications at Park University.

Ugandan journalism from Pg 6



(Above, below right) Radio journalists learn the basics of peace journalism in Uganda in 2010 and 2011.

strongest evidence of a dearth of media induced or exacerbated violence can be seen in results from a survey we conducted of 40 radio journalists/presenters and 20 radio managers from throughout Uganda during the first two weeks of March. Among other things, those surveyed were asked if anything (news, talk program, panelists, telephone callers) broadcast by their radio station encouraged or incited violence. All 60 responded no.

Can our peace journalism project take credit for this lack of media induced violence? The journalists who attended our post-election follow up meetings weren't hesitant about crediting our project with preventing violence. The journalists said the workshops lead to more responsible and balanced reporting that carefully avoided inflammatory language or irresponsible, sensationalistic stories.

The survey results confirmed what the journalists told us. Respondents were asked to rate the effectiveness of the peace/electoral journalism trainings for radio journalists, announcers, and managers (on a 1-5 scale) in preventing broadcasts that might encourage or incite violence. Five is very effective, and one not at all effective. The average for this question was 4.38, somewhere between effective and very effective.

Those surveyed were also asked to rate the effectiveness of the peace/electoral journalism trainings in improving the professionalism of election coverage. The average was 4.33. The project succeeded because of the dedication of Project Assistant Gloria Laker and the Ugandan journalists who committed themselves to improving their professionalism and making their communities a better place.

It's our hope that this peace and electoral journalism model can be replicated elsewhere, since it proved to be such a powerful tool for peace and reconciliation in Uganda.

throughout Uganda, as evidenced by the 9,222 miles that Project Assistant Gloria Laker and I traveled during the project.

Our sore backs and chronic fatigue did not go unrewarded.

By any measure, the project was successful. Ugandans in 14 towns formed Peace Clubs. These clubs joined forces at a summit in Kampala in March, and formed a national organization to promote peace. The Public Service Announcement project also succeeded in getting peaceful messages broadcast on dozens of radio stations throughout Uganda. Most telling, there were no incidents of media induced or exacerbated election violence in 2010-2011. The

strongest evidence of a dearth of media induced or exacerbated violence can be seen in results from a



PJ trainer: Seminars spur changes

By Gloria Laker Aciro

As a journalist and project assistant of the 10 month long U.S. State Department/USAID funded reporting project in Uganda, I am still thrilled and full of joy with the achievements of the project which was aimed at reducing media induced violence in the last election..

Before the election, tension was high among Ugandans for a possible violence. People living in Kampala stocked food in their houses, filled their cars with gas while others took refuge with their families in the country side for fear of election violence and subsequent war. But this was not to come.

I attribute this to the Peace, Electoral and development reporting project which set a good ground for the election by training radio journalists, establishing

15 community peace clubs where local leaders, who are also peace advocates, played the watch dog role on the media in an effort to see that journalists use peaceful language on radio. Also, no violence message 'Public Service Announcements' aired on several radio stations in the country which also help create room for a reduced violence.

This fear became a huge challenge to me and Prof.

Steven Youngblood, who directed the project. There was need for us to do something, meaning no rest and no sleep, instead running around the country gathering radio journalists, preaching peace and helping them say and do it using peaceful approach. We had to make sure the ground was smooth for the election. There were a lot of speculations and rumors. We were afraid of feeling disempowered, but this was not the case. We stood our ground and remained strong in seeing that we made changes in the lives of reporters despite fear from

citizen, we were more committed in meeting our goals and results.

The trainings we conducted for radio personnel were indeed very helpful because they ensured there was no media induced violence because the electronic media particularly gave more voice for peace makers and avoided use of hate speech and inflammatory language

in their reporting. The project thus saw Ugandan media give its best in 2011 election coverage compared to the past elections. Grace Lekuru, a peace journalist with Radio Rupiny in Gulu, Northern Uganda, is one of the journalists trained. She commented, "If media was to incite violence during 2011 elections then Uganda would have seen the worst election violence such as that of Kenya in 2007/2008'."

In just ten months, we trained

PJ in Uganda

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Gloria Laker is the founder and director of the Peace Journalism Foundation (PJF) of East Africa. Laker was the project assistant of the 2010-11 Uganda Peace, Developmental, and Electoral Journalism project. She is a journalist, and has reported extensively on the war in Northern Uganda. She has worked for the BBC and the Uganda Media Development Foundation, among others.

Uganda PJ trainer from Pg 8

more than 500 radio journalists from different parts of the country. We travelled 14,000 km in the course of the project, covering the North, South, East, Central and Western part regions of Uganda.

The trainings not only focused on peace and electoral journalism, but also the development aspect, leaving the journalists full with enough materials and information on the importance of peace in the development process.

What impressed me most was the fact that reporters changed the language they use in reporting. On days of production (journalists were assigned peace journalism style radio stories), I always got to bed past midnight as we brainstormed with the journalists on the best words to choose to make a conflict story or issue a peaceful radio story.

Lekuru said the training changed her styles of reporting and choice for words. "I got a bachelor degree in mass communication from Uganda's most prestigious university, and I came out of the university thinking conflict makes a bigger and better story other than choosing to give peace more chance. It was therefore sheer luck that I got training under this project directed by professor Komagum." Komagum, meaning lucky in the Acholi language, was a name given by some of the journalists to Prof. Youngblood.



"Today I have become so passionate about peace and development journalism that I am going to take every opportunity that I can get to promote peace and development in any community," added Lekuru.

The trainings included lectures, discussions, and hands-on exercises. Usually the argument/discussions would get hot on topical issues like closure of the CBS radio. (A Kampala station closed for inciting the October, 2010 riots). This were not just small arguments, tough one like in a typical newsroom. However, Prof. Youngblood was always quick at controlling and correcting the participants each time the debate got hot. This to me created a good learning environment and was also a sign of maturity from the participants and willingness to differentiate good from bad. Usually on a first day of all our seminars, the journalist were not so free to express themselves. The number one fear was seeing a white man teaching them. Others asked for allowance, an old fashioned and corrupted approach associated with most Ugandan NGOs. Little by little they settled in for serious learning. On the last days of the seminars, one could see worry in the eyes of the participants. They would not want the seminars to end.

I can authoritatively say 97% of the journalists who received the training were very positive and appreciated the significance of peaceful reporting in relation to development journalism. This resulted to many of them receiving awards for good stories, with the best peace story coming from the most violent region of Karamoja known for its lack of development. Katherine Anyango, the top peace journalism award winner from Uganda, is a Karamojong journalist from the Bokora tribe. She is now a peace advocate in the region and regularly shares her experience with fellow journalists on how to do a peaceful story. She has also introduced peaceful programs on Nenah FM.

Finally, the Uganda project has also led to the founding of a Peace Journalism Foundation (PJF) - East Africa with a regional office in Kampala. The foundation preaching peace journalism is the first of its kind in the region that is looking at creating a peaceful society through the media.

Measuring violence in the news media

By the Institute for Economics and Peace

War, conflict, and violence, being sensational events, are still considered the most newsworthy stories when compared to other topics. In light of this fact, violence-related news stories are some of the most widely reported topics covered by major news networks. Research by the Institute for Economics and Peace has found that, on average, the more violent a country is the more violence-related news stories it receives. That is to say, the number of news stories a country receives is proportional to the amount of violence in that country. The aphorism, "if it bleeds, it leads", is an apt description of the modus operandi of major news networks and journalists around the world.

Research

Using Media Tenor's extensive database of more than 164,000 news items compiled from 31 news and current affairs programs from four continents, IEP analyzed media reports in terms of the topics covered and the tone of reports. In brief summary, IEP found that the overall number of negative reports exceeded the number of positive reports by

more than three times. Furthermore, at the country level, the greater the level of violence in a country, the greater the number of negative reports the country receives. Similarly, the countries that saw their situation deteriorate saw the number of overall reports increase, with the majority being negative and violence-related topics. Peaceful countries, or those countries in which violence was reduced most drastically, saw little or a modest amount of reporting.

The Institute for Economics and Peace (IEP) is a non-profit research organization dedicated to shifting the world's focus to peace as a positive, achievable, and tangible measure of human well-being and progress. For more, see: <http://economicsandpeace.org/>

These facts, while obvious to some, point to some interesting issues, particularly in relation to the events that continue to unfold around the Arab Spring. The Arab Spring countries' received, on average, over 20% more violence-related reports than the rest of the world. Furthermore, as we would expect, the tone of coverage was overwhelmingly negative or neutral. However, using IEP's 'Structures of Peace' taxonomy, which identifies eight factors (Distribution of Resources; Relations with Neighbors; Rights of Others; Free Flow of Information; Business Environment; Functioning of Government; Education) that are necessary for a peaceful society, we see interesting patterns emerge: some of the reasons cited for the Arab Spring uprisings were low wages, lack of jobs, and poverty. Analyzing the news reports in terms of the Structures of Peace shows that Functioning of Government and Violence topics (Warfare, Crime, and Domestic Security) accounted for over 90% of reports.

Similarly, reporting on Education, Rights of Others, and Free Flow of Information received minimal coverage despite being important topics which had a direct and significant bearing on the events in the Middle East and North Africa.

This reveals two separate facts. Firstly, news networks are subject to a number of pressures and constraints: retaining viewers while attempting to acquire new viewers, resource and organization capacity, media ownership, and newsworthiness of events. These factors can provide considerable insight in explaining current reporting patterns. Nile News, for instance, the Egyptian government-owned news network systematically under-reported the massive wave of protests in Egypt in early 2011.

Secondly, given the power of media and its pivotal role in disseminating information to the public, there may be scope for reporting on other equally important but non-violent news topics (besides business news which is the predominant non-violent new topic). The media's coverage of news and current affairs affects not only the standard of public debate, but the very topics which come under scrutiny. By shifting focus to topics that are important, there could be an opportunity to resolve issues without the need for violence, unrest, and uncertainty.

There is ample opportunity for 'peace journalism', i.e. shifting the focus from being exclusively on violence-related issues. This is particularly poignant now as Egypt still attempts to establish itself as a full-democracy and Libyan rebel forces have been accused of war crimes. Focusing on the social, political, and economic context that created the current situation can potentially offer solutions or at the very least, be much more informative.

IREX supports peace media projects

By IREX

Since the early 1990s, IREX (International Research and Exchanges Board) has implemented more than \$150 million in programs in support of media in more than 80 countries worldwide, including conflict-affected, transitional, and authoritarian states. IREX programs engage professional and citizen journalists and media managers working across all media platforms as well as the organizations that support robust media sectors, including university journalism programs, professional associations and market research.

IREX's media programs work with partners in many conflict-affected environments, including Iraq, Somalia, Liberia and Timor Leste. We look closely at the impact that media in varying formats can have where there is current or potential violence, or the opportunity to avoid or mitigate conflict.

PJ NGO

Here are two examples of our current programming:

- In Kosovo, the Strengthening Independent Minority Media Program supported by USAID, seeks to move forward from past conflict through attention to media serving Serbian communities. The program supports "Kosnet Info," a weekly public affairs TV program produced jointly by the four members of TV Mreza, a network of local stations in the scattered and isolated amid the predominantly ethnic Albanian population. Serbs in Kosovo are finding it hard to come to terms with Kosovo's independence, which was declared in February 2008. Particularly in north Kosovo, which is predominantly Serb, they are reluctant to recognize institutions of the Kosovo government and wish to be



IREX's TV Mreza in action in Kosovo.

re-united with Serbia itself. They have erected barricades and made it hard for the Kosovo government and international organizations to administer the border crossings.

The IREX program was set up to improve the quality of information in the Serb communities and strengthen the capacity of local radio and TV stations to cover news about Kosovo themselves, rather than using agencies and TV stations in the Serbian capital Belgrade. IREX has established networks of local stations, re-equipped them with modern

IREX is a Washington, DC based non profit international development organization specializing in strengthening independent media, civil society and education worldwide. Founded in 1968, IREX has an annual portfolio of over \$60 million and a staff of over 500 professionals worldwide. IREX has pioneered specialized work in media sector strengthening as a key underpinning for democratic and economic development, the fight against corruption and the avoidance or mitigation of conflict.

digital technology and built up their capacity to report and analyze local and regional events. In particular it has worked with the stations in the north to make sure that their coverage is balanced, professional and not provocative. All the TV network members share news and feature programs, building up their coverage of events in Kosovo as a whole.

The new "Kosnet Info" program goes one stage further, improving the level of debate about difficult political issues and including interviews with representatives of Kosovo institutions, which have been rejected in the past by one of the leading TV stations in the north. For example, the first program in the series was produced by one of the partner TV stations in north Kosovo and included an item about attitudes in south Kosovo to the recent unofficial referendum held in the north about citizens' willingness to engage with Kosovo institutions. The item was well balanced, covering the full range of viewpoints.

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Do Afghani journalists understand conflict?

By Christine Roehrs, journalist/trainer

An Afghan colleague told me a story some days ago. It came from one of the provinces where the American troops are regularly running heavy operations. He had heard it in a local radio program. The journalist reported on some Friday prayers in mosques. The Mullahs had said: People, keep your women and girls strictly in the house from now on – the marines are out there on our streets, fishing them away with nets!

The journalist had not contacted the regional command of the American forces about why the troops might have decided to reduce the female population of the district with fishnets. Instead, he had asked the Mullah who had cried the loudest. Turned out one of the Mullah's nephews, who was able to read and write, had looked the term "marine" up in the internet. Apparently his English was not the best, because somehow he did not end up at the definition "marine - one of the five branches of the US military" but at the definition "marine - an adjective

usually applicable to things relating to the sea or ocean". "This is why they act so inhuman", the Mullah said to the journalist. "They aren't even human beings! They come from under water!"

The journalist had not questioned this – or by the way where the nets came into the story! - nor had he done additional research on the origins of those potential American fish-soldiers. Instead he had broadcast his piece, putting

the local population in awe and shock, sowing even more mistrust about the nature and goals of the international community in Afghanistan, and, of course, aggravating the situation of the local women and girls, many of whom for weeks were not even under burqas allowed on the streets and markets anymore.

No, many Afghan journalists do not understand the conflict in their own country properly. They understand half of it. There are three different reasons why.

First, Afghan journalists do not have access to information from a very mighty, powerful part of the conflict, and

PJ in Afghanistan

this is the international side of it. Many Afghan journalists have already heard of the importance of balancing information and researching with all stakeholders. But the international aid agencies and military forces form a closed community. And this is a community which has much more money, much more fire power and much more international influence than any Afghan authority. There is a second state, an international state, within the Afghan state. There are soldiers, who fight a war that many Afghans do not understand anymore, who produce civilian casualties, who do night raids, who announce victories that are not real for the Afghan population. There are also aid workers in expensive white armored vehicles spending billions of dollars on projects the beneficiaries know well – but already the neighboring village does not know anymore who exactly the white-car-people are and what they do. And there are businesses and bars, restaurants and alcohol and compounds and in general a daily life totally and increasingly separated from the daily Afghan life – although all of these foreign people are supposed to be there to support and to develop Afghanistan, maybe even "free" it--at minimum to work on decreasing the country's many conflicts.

The NGO that I am supporting, Mediothek, did a series of conferences very recently to bring together Afghan media and international stakeholders, wanting to initiate dialogues and to push for a better coverage of the international engagement and thus better informing the Afghan public. The amount of bitterness expressed by the Afghan journalists telling about the past years was amazing.

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Christine Roehrs, German print journalist, has been based in Afghanistan for the past 3 years. She is working in media development, management, relations & training. For two years, she helped build the Media Development & Programs Unit of Mediothek, an Afghan NGO running five media houses in Afghanistan and one in Pakistan.

Afghan From Pg 12

Journalists would say, no, we don't call ISAF when we hear about fish-soldiers catching our women in nets. ISAF public affairs officers don't speak our language, they never get back to us, they are never honest about names and numbers, and they treat us like terrorists when we enter the camps, searching us with machines, men and dogs The human factor is not to be underestimated looking out for potential professional and conflict sensitive reporting among the Afghan media. It is hard to stay unbiased and to try getting information over and over again and to weigh it fairly when you have been not taken seriously or treated respectfully for years.

ISAF, the International Security Assistance Force, did not issue Dari and Pashto press releases until some months ago. It took them nine years to decide to communicate with the Afghan public, also media, in its own language - in a country where the illiteracy rate is about 70 per cent, still. And forget about English, German, Dutch, French, Italian, Polish or Swedish skills ... International aid agencies, governmental as well as non-governmental, seldom employ Afghan outreach staff. Their media offices are often located in the home countries which makes it even more difficult (and expensive) for Afghan media to access them. If there is press staff, it is mostly busy with reporting back to the own country about goals and achievements.

This lack of transparency and communication, also through Afghan media, has caused several conflicts which are widely discussed in international politics these days. It has helped increasing prejudices and anxieties within the Afghan society, it has produced anger and frustration,

Continued on Pg 14



Photos:
Winter
scenes from
Afghanistan,
by Christine
Roehrs.

Understanding Conflict From Pg 13

and has caused misunderstandings about the intentions of the international community in Afghanistan. As an indirect result wide parts of the Afghan society are persuaded that the “foreigners” cannot be trusted. This negative atmosphere also has obstructed peace building and development efforts.

The second reason for media having problems understanding the conflict properly is: There is no “THE CONFLICT” in Afghanistan. There are several conflicts and several stakeholders. There are ethnic conflicts along the lines between Hazara and Pashtoons, or Tadjiks and Uzbeks, or Pashto speakers and Dari speakers, or nomadic Kuchi and local communities and so on ... There are conflicts between Taliban and local communities, between Taliban and international forces, between international forces and international forces, between governmental authorities and local warlords and foreign governments. How the conflicts are covered often depends on which

side the journalist is on or from, and if he is able to abstract from his own point of view and upbringing and stay unbiased.

And this leads to the third reason why Afghan journalists have a hard time understanding the conflict in their own country and covering them in a conflict sensitive way. And this is the massive lack of professional education.

There are gaps about how to research properly, how to use all sources available, how to weigh and judge information, how to present it, plus there is very often the ethical framework missing, this kind of guiding inner compass.

There is also unfortunately often little interest in and awareness about the importance of background talks, building and maintaining contacts and understanding the complexities of things beyond the actual story to report on.

This educational gap has to do with the fact that the international but also the national providers of journalistic education are not cooperating. The opposite is the case: There is a lot of turf protection going on, refusing to provide other organizations with participants list of events for example or refusing to share ideas, knowing that they all are in the end competing for the same funding.

But the biggest problem is that the supply is not keeping up with the need.

PJ in Afghanistan

In Afghanistan, the media landscape has boomed over the last 10 years, after never having any proper or free media. There was a short time of modern media development in the 1930's under King Amanullah, but look at the Afghan history. Afterwards came one dictator, one repressive regime after the other, plus decades of war and civil war.

A little excursion into the Afghan media development might make sense, starting with the positive: Compared to the neighboring countries, Afghanistan has a very lively and critical media scene. We always draw a very gloomy picture of the media in Afghanistan, and of course circumstances are partly dramatic in terms of independency, corruption, finances, threats, censorship and self-censorship. Nai, an Afghan media NGO, does a regular media watch report, and in the ten-year report which came out last summer, it has gathered 26 cases of murder, 12 cases of injury, 24 cases of kidnapping, 58 cases of beating, 58 cases of short term confinement, 71 cases of intimidation and 3 cases of long-term imprisonment.

Yet, Afghan journalists can say “Karzai is a pimp” in a famous evening talk

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Afghan From Pg 14

show and get away with this. Try this in Iran. We have more than 300 print products in the country, we have 24 active TV stations, we have hundreds of radio broadcasters. Also, journalism is very fashionable, meaning that thousands of young people enter the “profession” every year. 10 years ago Afghanistan had about 200 journalists, today there are more than 10,000. The five university journalism departments in Afghanistan toss about 250 to 450 new journalists on the market ever year.

But, here comes the negative: The educational system does not keep up with the boom. The handful of private and international providers of course cannot take care of this flood in terms of a proper education. Kabul university journalism faculty, just one example, officially worked with two books until not long ago, written by

former heads of the department, one 28 years ago, one 40 years ago, I was told. Mazar journalism department teaches its students on printing techniques by explaining about the brave old Heidelberger Druck – a machine which is 80 years old. But not because they have this machine, but because they have some yellowed, crinkled manuals for it.

My assistant, Harima, 22, who just got her Bachelor in journalism from Kabul University, told me one day that she had asked one of her teachers about how to interview traumatized victims of a conflict (she had attended one of our conflict sensitive reporting courses before and got intrigued in the matter). The answer was, “You always ask for the full name and age, and you try not to make them cry.”

Again, many Afghan journalists don't understand the conflict fully. If they are lucky they understand or at least want to understand the Afghan

conflict lines, because they are accessible for them. But Afghanistan's conflicts are highly complex, and they are international. There are people who say: For everybody's sake: Let's leave that country and reduce the conflicts to Afghan only stakeholders. The Afghans don't want us anyway. The Afghan media's life would be definitely easier – until forces take over who will not allow any kind of coverage.

Only when international aid workers and soldiers cooperate with journalists, when the international community puts more effort into journalism education, when the players involved decide to create a joint, comprehensive, countrywide approach, and when Afghan media are provided full access to information can reporters be expected to begin to understand and more competently report on the ongoing conflict.



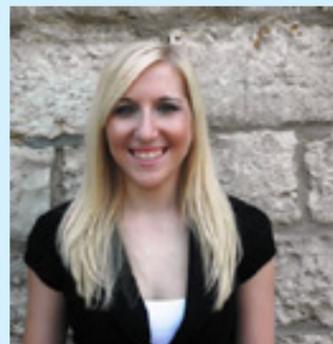
Is Peace Journalism ethical?

by Julie Dolezilek

The heavily debated practice of peace journalism is practiced when journalists think about the way they report stories and make choices that promote the chance for peace. This differs from traditional journalism due to the fact that peace journalists openly admit to writing with a bias toward peace. However, does this mean that the code of ethics used by peace journalists differs in some way from traditional journalism? Some may argue yes, but in my opinion, peace journalists adhere to the same code of ethics as defined by traditional journalists, sometimes even more strictly than their traditional counterparts.

According to the Stephen J. A. Ward in his article Ethics in a Nutshell, "ethics asks what we should do in some circumstance, or what we should do as participants in some form of activity or profession" (Ward). Most journalistic outlets have some sort of code of ethics that their journalists can access to help determine their actions. In comparing the code of ethics of traditional journalists to the principles of peace journalism, we can see that peace journalism follows every guideline already in place in the journalism field. The Radio Television Digital News Association (RTDNA) offers a fairly standard code of ethics which journalists should adhere to. This code cites the ethics of journalism as public trust, truth, fairness, integrity, independence and accountability (RTDNA, 2000). Each of these ethical principles can be applied to the practice of peace journalism.

When discussing public trust, the RTDNA states, "professional ... journalists should recognize that their first obligation is to the public" (RTDNA, 2000). Peace



Julie Dolezilek, 21, is enrolled in Peace Journalism class at Park University in Parkville, MO USA. She is from Holton, Kansas, is a double major in journalism and PR, and writes and takes photos for the Stylus, Park's student newspaper.

journalists maintain an obligation to the public by refusing to spread government propaganda, while giving many angles and faces to the stories that they report. Peace journalists believe that they should inform the public and let them make their own decisions, rather than reporting in such a way that public opinion is skewed. These principles strongly adhere to the Radio Television Digital News Association's statement that journalists "recognize that service in the public interest creates an obligation to reflect the diversity of the community and guard against oversimplification of issues or events. (RTDNA, 2000). This line of traditional

PJ and Ethics

journalism code sounds a lot like a tip offered to peace journalists by Lynch and McGoldrick. They state, "avoid portraying a conflict as consisting of only two parties contesting one goal ... instead, a peace journalist would try to disaggregate the two parties into many smaller groups, pursuing many goals, opening up more creative potential for a range of outcomes" (Lynch & McGoldrick, 2000).

Secondly, peace journalists are strong proponents of truth. An area listed in the code of ethics that sticks out as a key principle in peace journalism reads, "resist distortions that obscure the importance of events" (RTDNA, 2000). Peace journalists avoid using words that are not measurable, are demonizing, or otherwise report stories out of context. When reporting events taking place in war torn countries, peace journalists adhere to only the facts to avoid these distortions.

The third ethical principle, fairness, is one of the main constructs of peace journalism. By avoiding "accepting stark distinctions between 'self' and 'other,'" which can create an "us versus them" attitude, peace journalists aim to give every group an equal voice. This type of journalism gives everyone a fair chance to have a voice, as well as gives its audience a fair chance to make their own independent and well-informed choices about troubling and emotional events.

Integrity, as defined by the RTDNA, maintains that "journalists should present the news with integrity and decency, avoiding real or perceived conflicts of interest, and respect the dignity and intelligence of the audience as well as the subjects of news" (RTDNA, 2000).

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Anti-Assad agenda tests peace journalists

By Steven Youngblood

Director, Center for Global Peace Journalism

Responsible journalists are supposed to be unbiased, to avoid advocating any agenda, and to not encourage violence—to never pour gasoline on an already blazing fire. However, the upheaval in Syria has left journalists questioning the wisdom of these traditional beliefs.

Syria, and revolts last year during the Arab Spring, present the ultimate dilemma for a peace journalist. This breed of journalist is dedicated to giving peacemakers a voice, avoiding inflammatory language and sensational images, and framing stories so that they do not encourage violence. In the case of Syria, however, even a peace journalist would have to acknowledge that violence, even war, may be the only way to stop Assad's murderous regime.

So, under the circumstances, can a journalist, and especially a peace journalist, sleep well at night knowing that their coverage may be galvanizing the world to take up arms against Assad and his thugs? Does a peace journalist stop being a peace journalist if he is encouraging violence, no matter how well intentioned?

One answer might come from an examination of coverage from CNN and particularly Anderson Cooper's show, AC360. The program has featured a number of sensational, brutal, bloody images from Syria during the last several months. One evocative image was a video aired in March of a 2-year old boy who was wounded by shrapnel. The boy's family attempted to treat him at a make-shift hospital, only to have him die in his wailing father's arms. It was hard to watch the video without tearing up.

Later on that same show, Cooper openly labeled Assad and his regime liars for claiming that they were not attacking their own people.

PJ Commentary

These statements and images have been packaged with a very unambiguous agenda in mind. That agenda—to put pressure on the international community to act against the Assad regime.

The Syrian government, through its Syrian Arab News Agency, has released several propaganda pieces decrying what it says is the Western media's biased agenda.

One such article on the agency's website said, "Political commentator Jonathan Steele criticized in an article in the British Guardian newspaper the foreign media coverage of the events taking place in Syria, accusing it of bias and suppressing the facts that 'go against the dominant narrative about the Syrian crisis.'" Steele, the Guardian's former international affairs correspondent, said the western media coverage has turned into "a propaganda weapon" against Syria as all the key issues related to the popularity of President Bashar al-Assad, the Arab League observer mission and the US military involvement have been "distorted in the west's propaganda war...Most Syrians back President Assad, but you'd never know from western media."

(SANA, Jan. 18, 2012)

Of course, this is transparent propaganda. Yet, a perusal of the BBC, New York Times, and CNN would confirm the propagandists' central point—that the agenda of the Western media is unquestionably anti-Assad.

So, is the anti-Assad agenda undesirable, at

least in terms of journalistic ethics?

In Journalism Ethics 101, we were told that we must always report from a coldly objective standpoint. Certainly, if anything we ever wrote revealed a bias or agenda, we were chastised by the old-school guardians of the profession. If those gnarled old-schoolers were still around, they would undoubtedly admonish CNN and Cooper for

Continued on Pg 19



Swarthmore PJ course challenges students

By Jim MacMillan

I first came to Swarthmore College in 2010 to advise the staff of War News Radio, a weekly public radio program that primarily addressed aspects of American conflicts abroad that had been underreported. Its mission was to provide balanced and in-depth reporting, filling the gaps in other media coverage with historical perspectives and personal stories.

Seeing the reporters strive to practice solutions-oriented conflict journalism helped me prepare to teach the subject last fall. The Peace and Conflict Journalism course is an intensive combination of theory, instruction and practice that enables students to begin reporting immediately while focusing on the dynamic relationship between journalism and conflict. It also focuses on the theory and practice of peace journalism as an alternative to the conventions and biases of traditional war reporting.

PJ on campus

The course combines readings and discussions on peace and conflict studies -- including peace journalism theory -- with instruction on the fundamental principles and practices of journalism, multimedia production skills, content analysis and more.

We rely heavily on journalists' memoirs to relay the experience of reporting from conflict zones, but other readings address everything from the latest media industry news to spotting propaganda, journalism law and ethics, and psychological trauma.

Workshops address finding stories and sources, and pitching stories, as well as recording interviews on the phone and in the field, broadcast-style writing, peer editing and more. Primary assignments include the completion of one public radio report and one multimedia report. Deadlines are scheduled for each stage from story pitches to final reports.

Guest speakers including international journalists have helped us to consider the rapidly transforming intersections of journalism and activism, transparency and traditional notions of objectivity, and user-generated content with the democratization of distribution made possible by the Internet.

Students taking produced more than two dozen War News Radio reports last fall, addressing the rights and roles of women in Libya and Saudi Arabia, plus stories on veterans, war resisters, prisoner swaps, and Don't Ask, Don't Tell, among others. Several reports considered the relationship between the Arab revolutions of 2011 and the Occupy movement in the U.S.

Meanwhile, the student staff of War News Radio -- not enrolled in the class -- contributed stories including a critical look at the U.S. withdrawal from Iraq, an introduction to the Lord's Resistance Army in central Africa, and a series of reports on the economy of Afghanistan.

Students taking Peace and Conflict Journalism this spring are reporting on Afghan refugees in Pakistan, the ascendancy of a military leader in Guatemala, benefits for Filipino veterans of World War II, and the plague of femicides in Ciudad Juarez -- as well as urban education near Philadelphia and environmental justice in New York City.

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Jim MacMillan is the Journalist in Residence at the Lang Center for Civic and Social Responsibility at Swarthmore College. He has been an Assistant Professor in Convergence Journalism at the University of Missouri, a Knight-Wallace Fellow at the University of Michigan and an Ochberg Fellow at the Dart Center for Journalism and Trauma. Previously, MacMillan was the senior photographer at the Philadelphia Daily News and was the Baghdad Staff Photographer for the Associated Press when the staff was honored with the Pulitzer Prize for Breaking News Photography in 2005.



IREX From Pg 11

In Liberia, the October 2011 presidential elections were closely watched in the context of the post-conflict recovery and the potential for renewed violence. Through the USAID-funded Civil Society & Media Leadership Program, IREX worked to support transparent, legitimate, and peaceful elections through a comprehensive effort with media and civil society in Liberia. "IREX and its civil society and media partners are striving to build elections awareness and provide all Liberians with accurate, unbiased and non-partisan facts so that they may make their informed choices in peace and be a part of the country's move towards stability and ever increasing prosperity," the program director, Tilly Reed, said in the weeks before the election.

IREX aimed to prepare the media to effectively cover the elections by providing equipment and training to journalists and media outlets and supporting the establishment of the Elections Reporting Center. The center, hosted by the Liberia Media Center, included VSAT internet, a call center and computers is a venue for day-to-day technical and professional support in the use of ICTs and social media for elections reporting. It was a hub to monitor and report on media coverage of the elections across newspaper, urban-based radio, television and community-based radio. The center hosted an Online Media Resources Clearinghouse for hosting results via social media sites and other related elections websites. After the elections, the website posted vote count results submitted via SMS by reporters from approximately 60% of the country's 4,457 polling stations. The site had over 3 million hits in the days following the election. Because the site's vote tally matched that of the National Election Commission, it also helped to improve the "perceived" credibility of the NEC in the minds of the public.

The IERX program in Liberia also:

- Established a mobile phone based platform to be used by the public and election monitors to report election related activities and issues. The system also texts civic education messages to people.
- Supplied equipment to journalists including smartphones, digital recorders, cameras, and laptop computers.
- Arranged mobile reporting through the purchase of an election reporting minivan and 60 motorcycles for journalists to maximize coverage reach.
- Helped support a two-day conference on Media Ethics and Conflict Sensitive Elections Reporting.
- Trained 200 community peace actors to promote a peaceful campaign and elections season through civic education, community forums, community theater and other platforms through CSML's implementing partner, the Liberia Women Media Action committee (LIWOMAC). The peace actors organized live broadcast public forums on the Liberia Women Democracy Radio.

Commentary: Syria From Pg 17

straying from "the facts" and not balancing each report with a Syrian response, even if that Syrian response consists of bold lies wrapped in jingoistic propaganda.

The old-schoolers are wrong. Since "the facts" are often in dispute, a journalist's role is to sort through all the data and propaganda and decide what information one's viewers and readers need to formulate an educated opinion about the subject.

During her last on-air interview a few hours before she was killed in Homs, journalist Marie Colvin and Anderson Cooper discussed their misgivings about coverage of the crisis in Syria. Cooper asked Colvin if she thought the bloody, inflammatory coverage was a necessary evil. Colvin replied emphatically that the coverage was vitally important so that the world could know and understand what's happening to Syrians. Colvin died convinced that she and her colleagues in Syria were serving a greater good. Colvin was right. The aggressive anti-Assad media agenda does serve a higher purpose—one designed to shorten and eventually end the suffering of the Syrian people. Feeding this agenda should make journalists, and particularly those dedicated to peace journalism, uncomfortable. Yet, the alternative—Homs ceaselessly burning and bleeding—is unthinkable.

On campus From Pg 18

The class meets at the Lang Center for Civic and Social Responsibility at Swarthmore's campus near Philadelphia. We train and workshop in Lodge 6, which has been home to War News Radio since its inception in 2005.

Next, we are launching Lodge6.org, a student journalism incubator supporting independent reporting projects across a broadened spectrum of topics and media, but never to the exclusion of conflict or radio. Although we have suspended the weekly program, we still produce and distribute individual reports under the War News Radio banner.

Swarthmore offers no journalism

major and only one other journalism course, but is home to a vibrant student media community including a weekly campus newspaper, a daily campus news site and now Lodge 6.

Lodge 6 is open to all Swarthmore students and will focus on the latest practices, including social media journalism, actively sharing the reporting process with extended communities, as well as strategic content distribution, search engine optimization, and community engagement.

Early Lodge 6 projects include a series of video reports on a tent city in New Jersey; interviews with American activists who were detained in Bahrain; and an audio diary from Kurdistan, produced by a student who



Lodge 6, Swarthmore campus

sent a recorder along on a trip with an American aid worker. Perhaps unsurprisingly for a college with a rich Peace and Conflict Studies program -- and Quaker roots -- we can identify a preexisting peace journalism tradition, but formalizing the pursuit within the curriculum is helping to clarify, organize and advance ideal practices.

Ethics from Pg 16

In times of conflict, peace journalists have many opportunities to show integrity while reporting the news. Extremely graphic events and images happen every day during a war, but the way they are reported can either show integrity or the lack thereof on the part of the journalist. Although violence must be portrayed in the media, the extent to which it is brutally portrayed shows the ethics and integrity of a journalist. Peace journalists strive to report these events in a way that explains the event but does not overly inflame the situation.

Journalists should "defend the independence of all journalists from those seeking influence or control over news content" (RTDNA, 2000). Lynch and McGoldrick also state that journalists should avoid reporting what falls into the category of propaganda. Two of the tips they offer urge peace journalists to take care when reporting government actions and the opinions of government leaders. These tips read, "avoid making an opinion or claim seem like an established fact" and "avoid greeting the signing of documents by leaders, which bring about military victory or cease fire, as necessarily creating peace." In addition to these tips, peace journalists should refuse to simply act as a channel or means for the government to spread their opinions and propaganda.

The last principle listed in the Radio Television Digital News Association is accountability. In this area, peace journalism may well surpass traditional journalism. A main tenant of peace journalism is to take into account the effect that journalism can have. Peace journalists examine the consequences of their reporting before it is published, avoiding writing that can incite violence or further worsen a conflict. In this way, peace journalism is accountable to the public.

After examining the elements of a traditional code of ethics used by journalists across the board, it is easy to determine that peace journalism follows all accepted ethical practices of journalism. Although many still argue that peace journalism should not be practiced for reasons such as bias and objectivity, it is apparent that ethics should not be included in such debates.

Gandhi-Peace Journalist from Pg 3

Gandhi constructively used journalism as a vehicle of his political activism. However, the movement stretched beyond the political realm and entailed the striving for dignity and self-respect. It brought about elemental transformation in the socio-political frame of the Indian community.

Today journalism is a tool to create an ever expanding source of revenue, but for Gandhi, who had very different goals, revenue was always more of a spiritual return. Always a social and humanitarian crusader, Gandhi's underlying journalistic concerns were with the living conditions of the poorest of the poor. He believed in living frugally to the point of excess. In his book *Small is beautiful*, E.F. Schumacher points out how Gandhi rejected Western urbanization and mass production in favour of a more traditional labor intensive approach. Even his approach to circulation of his paper was unique-rather than depending on advertisements as a source of revenue, he advocated copying and circulating of papers.⁴ Gandhi's approach to journalism was totally devoid of ambitions. To him it was not a vocation to earn his livelihood. It was a means to serve the public.

Gandhi as a peace journalist

Gandhi, in a journalistic career spanning nearly four decades, used journalism as tool of social reformation and building peace in India. As a journalist Gandhi took the subjects which could only be used for peace building among the people. In Gandhi's concern the main objectives of journalism are: A. Understand popular opinion and give expression to it; B. Arouse desirable sentiments among the people and C. Fearlessly expose popular defects.

Gandhi used journalism as a tool for avoiding the escalation of conflicts in every time. As a country like India with differences in each and every community, the chance of violence is inevitable. Gandhi's experiences both in South Africa and in India convinced him that violence could only be ended by unilateral acts of kindness. For avoiding the Hindu-Muslim conflict he advised both parties to understand the situation, and the language of Gandhi reveals the inner power within him. For instance he dedicated the entire issue of *Young India* dated may 24, 1924 to write a lengthy article on Hindu-Muslim tension, its causes and cure. In the article, he used sober language to express his feelings while advising the two parties to resist from the temptation of resorting to violence and see reason in the situation.⁵

Furthermore, peace journalism seeks involvement of people to reduce tensions between warring factions. In the Gandhian approach, Gandhi understood the involvement of the people would be useful to solve communal riots. Thus, he suggested a formation of a peace brigade to reduce frequent conflicts by prescribing a code of conduct to the members of the peace brigade. In *Harijan* (June 18, 1936) he wrote, "Some time ago I suggested the formation of a peace brigade whose members would risk their lives in dealing with riots, especially communal. The idea was that this brigade should substitute (for) the police and even the military. This reads ambitious. The achievement may prove impossible. Yet if the congress is to succeed in its non-violent struggle, it must develop the power to deal peacefully with such situation". These writings clearly shows that how Gandhi used his words for peace building.

Writing about the Indian Opinion, Gandhi said, "It was never intended to be a commercial concern. So long as it was under my control, the changes in the journal were indicative of changes in my life...I cannot recall a word in those articles set down without thought or deliberation, or a word of conscious exaggeration, or anything merely to please. Indeed the journal became for me training in self-restraint, and for friends a medium through which to keep in touch with my thoughts."⁶ If we can practice peace journalism effectively, then the role of journalist is prominent. The above statement of Gandhi clearly mentioning the character and morality of a journalist is most important. And a journalist can work effectively if he can express and apply his soul through his words.

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Iraqis learn conflict sensitive reporting

By Benoite Martin

Until 2003, the Baath Party owned and controlled all news agencies in Iraq in a unique aim to relay State propaganda.

After 2003 and following the fall of the former regime, Iraq witnessed the emergence of new opportunities for media with the creation of numerous newspapers and satellite channels. However, many agencies were set up to support political parties' propaganda and very few outlets proved to be independent. As a result, media has played an active part in exacerbating violent conflict in Iraq.

PJ in Iraq

There are large needs for capacity building in Iraq of media outlets and journalists to

ensure that principles of independence and impartiality are sustained and to improve quality of reporting. It is as well important to raise an understanding towards the role that media can play in exacerbating conflict and towards the possibilities for the media to provide new communication channels and platforms leading to dialogue and peace-building.

INSAN Iraqi Society is a national non-governmental organization which seeks to build peace in Iraq through building peace capacities of individuals and the civil society at large.

Besides working with communities and political leadership, the NGO has been working with journalists in Iraq, building their capacity to better understand how media often fuels violence across Iraq and foresee the role that

media could play in fostering dialogue and understanding between conflicting parties.

In 2010 and 2011, with the support of the United States Institute of Peace (USIP), INSAN Iraqi Society trained 20 journalists working in the governorates of Baghdad and Diyala in conflict-sensitive journalism. After discussing how Iraqi media is fuelling violent conflict, participants learnt basics of the characteristics of conflict and techniques to manage conflict. They looked closely at the language that is being used in reporting and how media can be a platform introducing different points of views and illustrating positive and peaceful initiatives. Many practical exercises were conducted with the trainees so they could apply their newly acquired skills. The training was provided by an experienced trainer from Lebanon, working with the organization Al Maharra, which has developed its own conflict-sensitive journalism training manual.

Following the theoretical training, the journalists were followed during a 6 months period and received 'on-the-job' training during which their media reports were reviewed by an experienced editor.



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Iraq

from Pg 24

Further, participants were requested to design and implement a change project that would mark their direct contribution to efforts of peace-building and reconciliation in Iraq. A participant filmed a documentary about the violence which occurred in 2005-2006 between two districts of Baghdad and analyzed efforts made by local leaders to resolve the conflict and achieve reconciliation. Another participant documented the protests occurring in Baghdad in Spring 2011 and organized a caricature exhibition highlighting the demands of the people to which officials were invited.

One participant from Baghdad illustrated the impact that the training had on his work. Before taking part to the training, when covering a violent event, he used to seek for elements in his report that would help the reader to indirectly identify the groups responsible for the actions. In April 2011, he covered the occurrence of a car bomb in a district of Baghdad. He reported at the local hospital and illustrated the discussion occurring between two religious leaders belonging to two different confessions in order to promote community cohesion.

Since late 2011, INSAN Iraqi Society has started working with journalists from the city of Kirkuk. Kirkuk is an oil-rich city disputed by the Iraqi and Kurdish Government in which tensions amongst its mixed communities are rising as pressures to determine the status of the city escalated.

The 26 participants are currently in the course of designing change projects and have proved to be a great asset to promote the peace-building work conducted by the NGO in the city. The program is support by UNESCO-Iraq Office.



(Above, below, opposite): ISAN seminar teaches conflict sensitive journalism in Iraq.





The Peace Journalist

Contact:

Steven Youngblood
Director
Center for Global
Peace Journalism
Park University
8700 NW River Park Dr.
Parkville, MO 64152 USA
(816) 584-6321

Email:

steve.youngblood@
park.edu

Twitter:

@PeaceJourn

Facebook:

Peace Journalism group

Peace and conflict sensitive journalism links:

INSAN-Iraq

<http://www.insaniraq.org/index.html>

IREX

www.irex.org

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+Peace Journalism and Forgiveness