

the PEACE JOURNALIST

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Working with Turkish journalists on reporting

Syrian Refugees



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 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.

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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.

A number of valuable peace journalism resources, including resource packets and online links, can be found at: <http://www.park.edu/center-for-peace-journalism/resources.html>.

Turkish journalists improve refugee reporting

By Nilufer Pembecioğlu

In the last three years, nearly 1.8 million refugees from Syria's war have been maligned and scorned by many in the region, leading to sporadic acts of violence against refugee camps and setting up the potential for retributive violence against refugees. There are 1,718,000 UNHCR registered refugees in Turkey according to March, 2015 UN reports.

Their situation is very critical even if most of them are provided large campsites, food, education, sanity and health opportunities by the government, yet, for those who are not in the campsites life is much more difficult.

Even if the two communities have a shared, long and deep past and have mutual positive feelings towards each other, in terms of media reporting of the crisis in Turkey, newspapers and media seem to be often superficial and characterized by misinformation, stereotyping, scapegoating and xenophobia. This coverage mostly blames the refugees for creating a strain on resources and sparking economic problems, especially inflation in food and housing costs, causing social disorders, etc. The newspapers

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Alliance of Civilizations (UNAOC) in 2005. She was a Fulbright Scholar in 2009 at the University of Florida.



Syrian residents of an informal, tent city in Adana, Turkey scrape by on odd jobs and through the kindness of some of their neighbors.

covering the Syrian refugee's stories seem to be a bit one-sided and even negative, targeting the refugees even if the headlines try to be somehow transparent. It seems that recognizing the uneasiness in society, media adds more fuel to the fire reporting extensively on this tension and consciously or not, through the news, the general audience was activated against the refugees.

Also, the government's attitude was criticized due to their 'politenesses. Without regard to the situation the refugees are in, the governmental bodies have been accused in the news of providing the refugees free health care, free high education, free residential permissions and job opportunities, etc. However, this kind of reporting serves the interests of neither refugees nor host communities.

“Media adds more fuel to the fire, reporting extensively on the tensions.”

All these coming together, neither the individual refugee stories nor their life conditions were questioned but the more 'able' situation they were put in is characterized. Yet, any kind of illegal action, any fight or disagreement situation is also associated with the refugees' being 'there' in the country and in general all these reflections were shown to be the refugees' fault as if it were their own choice. That's why individual or group narrative stories of the refugees' positioning them into the front layer would help them to mean themselves in general public. These rather 'direct' stories would also help the general audience understand the situation without mingling it with the stereotypes, hatred or governmental issues and put issues in a rather

Continued on next page

Syrian refugees *from Pg 3*

transparent and objective position. This would also help the refugees to see their past and present situation and project their hopes for the future. Putting all these together, there seemed to be a need for a media project using peace journalism to help the host communities better understand the situation, and to reduce the tensions that naturally occur between refugees and host communities.

The Project

The Project titled "Reporting Syrian Refugees: Building Communities Of Understanding In Turkey" is a collaborative project between Center for Global Peace Journalism at Park University in Parkville, Missouri USA and Istanbul



University Faculty of Communication, Istanbul, Turkey. The Project is funded by the US State Department and US Embassy in Ankara, Turkey.

Starting in August 2014, the project partners, Prof. Dr. Nilüfer Pembecioğlu and Center for Global Peace Journalism's Director Prof. Steven Youngblood, collaborated actively to work



on it. The key concepts addressed by the project include improving the living conditions of refugees by giving their concerns deeper and greater media attention; encouraging and nurturing a more stable peace between host communities and refugees; and empowering local journalists to employ peace journalism tools that foster reconciliation and discourage division and violence. The project suggests that the press, employing peace journalism, can help bridge this gap, and open essential dialogues, and aid refugees.

Two Seminars

The Project first aimed to feature two seminars in Southern Turkey, Adana, specifically for local journalists and

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At the Syrian refugee camp near Adana, Turkey: A happy pre-schooler; A budding football star; A refugee explains her difficult situation; A kindergarten/pre-school full of active children.



Syrian refugees *from Pg 4*

provide some field reporting experiences that seek to defuse the tension in the area. This peace journalism-style storytelling seeks to add depth and context to reports about refugees. The seminars achieved this objective not only by reaching out to the local and regional journalists of the area, but also the communication faculty and journal-

ism department staff and students of Çukurova University in Adana.

The seminars and the follow up field study, including visits to the refugee camps and tent cities, concentrated on the objectives to be accomplished by defining the do's and don'ts of PJ (Peace Journalism), critiquing the published material in newspapers, and telling the stories of refugees in a way that helps host communities understand the scope of the crisis.



Top left--A proud kindergarten teacher at the Adana refugee camp; A workshop participant takes one of hundreds of pictures; University attendees at the peace journalism seminar. Above--Life at an unofficial "tent city" is more than challenging for young and old alike.

The seminars included two day sessions on Peace Journalism and applications aiming to find out the myths and stereotypes about refugees perpetuated by the media. During the seminars, the collaboration and mutual understanding between the local journalists as field workers and training students as future journalists yielded many interesting aspects to be discussed and shared. The team including the coordinators of the project, journalism department and political sciences professors. Participants were also invited to take part in a live television program questioning the situation. <http://m.tvarsivi.com/trtturk-21-01-2015-651526y.html> ; <http://www.cnnturk.com/video/turkiye/kilis-elbeyli-konteyner-kentinde-neler-oluyor> .

The Field Work

The most important part of the project was not only the two days seminar part of the program but the hands-

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Syrian refugees *from Pg 5*

on reporting trips to Syrian refugee camps (one formal, the other a so-called “tent City”) in Adana. For both the practicing and future journalists, it was interesting to feel the camp life, observe the facilities and daily life experiencing the hopes and fears of the real refugees. The field seminars included camp visits for observations of these new cities established to keep refugees safe and healthy. The participants found out the impact of displacement on social and economic lives of the refugees. The visits to the tent cities of about 650 refugees living under difficult and limited conditions, using only their own sources and public facilities to make a life without any expectations or future, was also touching, the participants said.

This experience is expected to provide the participants an insight for their future reporting on how to cover refugee stories using a more humanistic approach regarding story selection, language, tone, possible consequences of the publication. In the context of this project, reporters were expected to improve their knowledge and skills about how to most effectively give voice to refugees and the issues that confront them, and how their reporting can help build bridges of understanding and tolerance.

The project’s proposed outputs were the media and multimedia about Syrian refugees and their relationship to the larger community in Turkey. The participants of the project are expected to share their stories during the International Peace Journalism Summit by 24-25-26 May 2015 in Istanbul. The summit will also welcome international specialists from other countries to analyze refugee coverage.



The Syrian refugee camp near Adana, Turkey holds about 10,000 residents, many of whom have satellite TV.



Top left--Kids outnumber adults at a tent city near the Adana bus station; Gathering for afternoon tea at the camp; Student return “home” after classes at camp; This tent city near the bus station sits across from the railroad tracks.



Study: Israeli press acts as 'propaganda vehicle'

By Moara Crivelente

Mass media have a deeply important role in conflict situations or their resolution; they can determine the rise on violent episodes and on distrust, or on the contrary, portray the different aspects and actors involved in conflicts in a positively complex manner, as opposed to the usual over-simplification. They are also fundamental in determining people's reactions, or their engagement and confidence in a peace process.

The media coverage of conflicts and the discourse promoted by political actors when addressing the public are extensively analyzed by various authors, such as Johan Galtung, who advocates for the journalists' engagement in a 'peace discourse.'

Examples of key arguments are centered on the dichotomies 'legitimate' and 'criminal', 'civilians' and 'terrorists', 'peace' and 'security'. In Israel, these arguments are employed through deeply nationalist discourses dedicated to forging an identity in a context of constant violence. The media use these arguments to narrate their stories using 'journalistic defense mechanisms', exemplified by the Israeli professor Gadi Wolfsfeld as discursive tools. These tools serve for diminishing the other's suffering and heightening emotionalism when telling one's own suffering, such as the prominence of graphics, statistics and military sources, in the first case, or images, names and familiar contexts, in the second, so war is better accepted.

The MA dissertation from which this paper derives aimed to evaluate the role that media should play in reducing violence through a less simplistic and even sensationalist coverage. The analysis centered on official discourses and the media coverage of the 2008-09 Israeli military operation 'Cast Lead' against the Gaza Strip, but the results were again found in the analysis of the last operation's coverage, 'Protective Edge', between July and August 2014, when over 2,150 Palestinians were killed and the Gaza Strip was again devastated.



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During the research, correspondences with the work of the Israeli media observer Keshev were relevant, with a positive methodological contribution, as well as professors Wolfsfeld's, Galtung's and Xavier Giró's, from the Autonomous University of Barcelona. This paper's analyses focused on two important Israeli newspapers' electronic version: Yedioth Ahronot's Ynet News and Ha'aretz. These newspapers were chosen for their influence, but also for the different approach each have towards the conflict – from critical perspectives to the defence of stances linked to the justification of the war. They represent the media that one part, the Israelis, directly or indirectly involved in the conflict, read. However, the fact that the opposing parties to the violence read different, antagonistic and nationalist papers is also important, as argued by Professor Wolfsfeld. Comparing the Israeli-Palestinian case to the Northern Ireland case, the fertile ground for nationalist and "us against them" narratives results from the fact that the two sides do not share communication vehicles.

The traditional Israeli media covered both Gaza conflicts in a poor way in terms of complexity. In an interview over the telephone, Israeli newspaper Haaretz's columnist Gideon Levy pointed out how the press in his country has again acted as propaganda vehicle during the 2014 Gaza operation.

The Israeli-Palestinian conflict is a constant, in a superficial or simplistic form, both in the international media and in the United Nations (UN) General Assembly meetings. Although international attention is certainly an important factor maintaining some form of compromise by the parties to the negotiations, in this case the perpetuation of a peace process is frustrating not only for the victims and the actors directly involved, but also for the audience. Through mass media, the frustration and the distrust regarding a negotiation process and the actors

Continued on next page

Israel, Propaganda from Pg 8

distrust regarding a negotiation process and the actors involved are heightened: the initial intense coverage and the gradual fading on attention are also fundamental in determining people's reactions or engagement, and their confidence in the process.

The analysis of an extensive corpus with news stories picked from the newspapers mentioned during three different events within the time of 'Operation Cast Lead' concluded that the Israeli media played an integral role in justifying violence. It was done mainly through the over-simplification and omission of contexts for the violence, the use of 'journalistic defense mechanisms' to dehumanize and even demonize Palestinians while emphasizing Israeli victimhood, and through the manipulation of International Humanitarian Law principles to frame and account for the Israeli Army's, the Palestinian armed groups' actions and even the death of many Palestinian civilians.

The exact same effort was made during last year's 'Operation Protective Edge', in a strategy that others already classified as a sort of "lawfare" – a development of a previous meaning assigned to the term by US General Charles Dunlap – indicating the use of International Humanitarian Law to stir the offensive, mindful of future accusations or condemnation.

Media coverage of peace efforts or of the escalation of violence, either generally or in isolated events, directly influence conflict resolution and negotiation processes. This is why media diplomacy is also the object of study for a number of experts in peace and conflict research, as well as in 'peace journalism' research. The analysis showed that mass or conventional media in Israel have

not only distorted facts and manipulated concepts, but it has also simplified the causes of the conflict and fuelled nationalist sentiments against the other, who was in turn de-humanized.

In this case, it is worth emphasizing that critical discourse analysis should complement peace journalism perspectives when searching for a balance in such asymmetrical power relations.

The questions supposed to be raised by the media regarding the supposedly inevitability of violence, as promoted by the official discourse, were responsibilities that journalists were not committed to throughout the whole coverage. The national media chose to hop on the nationalist, sensationalist and propagandistic role they often take on when covering in 'war mode', thus failing to raise or promote the peace option.



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IPRA to convene in Sierra Leone in November 2016

The 26th biennial conference of the International Peace Research Association (IPRA) is billed to take place in Freetown, Sierra Leone in November 2016, marking the second time Africa has hosted the conference since the founding of IPRA in 1964.

This was announced following the reelection of the two IPRA Secretaries-general, Dr Ibrahim Seaga Shaw and Dr Nesrin Kenar, who co-ordinated the 25th IPRA conference in Turkey, at

the organisation's administrative meeting in August.

IPRA celebrated its 50th anniversary and the First World War Centenary in style as part of its 25th biennial General Conference on "Uniting For Peace: Building Sustainable Peace Through Universal Values" hosted by Sakarya University at the prestigious Bomonti Hilton Hotel in Istanbul, Tur-



key, between August 11-15 2014.

The Istanbul conference brought together about 550 peace researchers and few others interested in peace research from 94 countries across all the continents with about 600 papers presented in 146 sessions.

For more information about IPRA 2016 in Sierra Leone, please contact Dr. Ibrahim Shaw at: ibrahim.shaw@northumbria.ac.uk.

PJ offers new options for Afghani journalists

By Jake Lynch

Peace activists in Herat have vowed to redouble their efforts for dialogue following several bomb explosions that killed 11 people in the province, blamed by a senior police chief on Taliban commanders finding shelter across the border in neighbouring Iran.

The paragraph above is a typical introduction to a story from my recent Peace Journalism training in Kabul. Organised by Mediothek Afghanistan with support from the German Institute for Cooperation, the workshop was attended by editors and reporters from all 34 provinces of Afghanistan.

A glance at any Afghan media reveals the primacy of an old news maxim: if it bleeds, it leads. Publics understandably want to know any information that affects their own security, which ensures continuing attention on bombs, battles and bullets.

But experience of conflicts all over the world shows there are invariably people at the same time working for peace: building bridges in their community; promoting dialogue, and advocating for understanding of the 'enemy' as a step towards eventual reconciliation. They typically operate on a small, very localised scale, but their efforts are the building blocks for peace, as they are in any conflict. What they often need is attention and publicity, enabling them to thrive and grow.

That is where Peace Journalism comes in. Its belief is to create opportunities for readers and audiences to consider and value nonviolent responses to conflict. In doing so, it attempts to uncover the issues in conflict – why people do what they do, the needs and interests that underpin their responses. It pays attention to people as peace-makers, not just elites. It takes

issue with propaganda. And – the most fundamental point – it portrays conflict as a set of problems to be resolved, not as a great tug-of-war that will end with one 'side' winning, the other losing.

The challenge, often, is how to work these elements in to reports of episodes in conflict such as the bombs of Herat, the example above, which were planted, to deadly effect, in May 2014. The next paragraphs of a Peace Journalism story on the subject could go like this:

Herat police chief, General Samiullah Qatrah, claimed to have documents showing financial support for the militants coming from the Islamic state. His remarks follow the latest casualties, seven members of the same family who died when their rickshaw hit a roadside bomb in Shindand District late on Tuesday. Five adults, including two women, and two

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children, were killed.

Amina, a woman peace activist from Shindand, last night called for understanding of what drives the perpetrators: "The Taliban are portrayed as the enemy, but we should remember that they are people, men with families, who have needs and concerns that lead them to take the actions they do".



She had come to know wives of some local Taliban fighters through her peace work, and used the relationship to negotiate the release of an 18-year-old boy who had been held hostage for 13 days – the son of one of her distant relatives. It proves that talking to the Taliban can work, she said.

Amina is a real person, as were others whose stories and angles featured in the workshop exercises, since the aim was to make it as realistic as possible. She took part in training provided by the Afghan Women's Network and The Institute for Inclusive Security, aimed at empowering women to take part in peace processes and negotiations at all levels in their own community.

She joined a group of 21 women from all over the country who attended a four-day workshop in New Delhi, India, to strengthen their advocacy and conflict resolution skills. The workshop, held in June 2013, was part of a two-year initiative by both groups, with international funding, to advance female participation in Afghani-

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Afghanistan from Pg 10



Afghan journalists hear presentation from Prof. Lynch at Mediothek workshop.

stan's peace process. The program has trained 60 women from 12 provinces.

Amina returned to Herat from New Delhi determined to share what she had learned. She organized workshops on women's role in the community, one of which was attended by wives of Taliban insurgents. Amina forged relationships with these women, visiting their homes and listening as they shared their concerns. She is a typical grassroots peace worker, who speaks with the authority of having actually done something for peace, not just talked about it. That makes her a good source. My own research shows that, when engaged through the story of an individual protagonist, readers and audiences sit up and take notice of arguments for peace.

If talking to the Taliban became a more widespread practice, what would there be to talk about? A valuable insight comes from Hazrat Sharif Modjadeddi, chairman of the Peace and Reconciliation Commission in Herat Province, who has overseen the surrender of dozens of Taliban members from the western provinces

who have joined the reconciliation process.

The experience has given him insights into what motivates local men to join the Taliban, and the changes that need to happen, to prevent further recruitment into the Taliban in future.

The Commission uses various mediators, including tribal elders, religious leaders and former combatants who



Editors and reporters from all 34 provinces attended the Mediothek workshop.

have already joined the process. If the former are necessary to contact and convince the insurgents, the latter play an important role in reassuring the men that they will be neither arrested nor prosecuted for their past activities.

Mr Modjadeddi says: "Some insurgents were civilians whose homes were destroyed by the International Forces, so they joined the Taliban".

They want development in their districts, he says: "clinics, schools and security" – especially protection against their former allies, now they have left the insurgency and joined the reconciliation process. This should include setting up army checkpoints for protection.

His remarks also indicate the need for some form of justice in respect of the wrongs suffered by many Afghan communities during years of war, including at the hands of international forces. One of the most shocking recent incidents of violence, which took place in Paktia province on the day before I arrived in the country, saw a suicide bomb attack kill or injure

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Afghanistan from Pg 11

more than 100 civilians at a volleyball match.

Dig deeper, though, and the record shows some local people would have ample reason to seek revenge for wrongs they have suffered. Just weeks earlier, hundreds of villagers protested over their allegation that seven civilians died in a NATO airstrike the Alliance said killed “eight armed enemy combatants”. The protesters brought seven corpses to the governor’s office, saying the strike targeted eight people collecting firewood, killed seven and left one man wounded. Their protest was greeted by official promises to investigate, which sounded rather formulaic: unless the grievances are properly followed up, resentment may fester, and lead to more atrocities.

Following the Taliban attack at the volleyball match, a very senior government official vowed revenge on the perpetrators. While an understandable reaction to the grievous loss suffered by the victims and their families, such a step would be to carry on the cycle of violence, and lead inexorably to more atrocities. By



Prof. Lynch congratulates a Mediothek workshop participant.



Afghan journalists discuss peace reporting techniques and challenges at a recent workshop in Kabul.

itself, the statement was therefore an example of propaganda. The only way for journalists to avoid reproducing the propaganda would be to ask: “If you take revenge on them, what do you expect them to do to you?”

The words and deeds of Amina and Mr Modjadeddi show what would be needed in order to divert the cycle of violence to a more productive path. Peace is not going to come in Afghanistan – any more than it has anywhere else – by expecting everyone on one side to throw up their hands, say “OK – we were wrong, you were right all the time”, and join the other side. It will require justice, and that means listening to the reasons why people join the conflict in the first place.

Afghanistan’s new president, Ashraf Ghani Ahmadzai, has called for a National Road Map for peace, to provide a sense of coordination for all peace efforts and a central reference point for dialogue. That is a welcome initiative, and, to give it meaning, it will require the free circulation of information as a key resource to make things happen. That confers both responsi-

bility and opportunity on journalists, who bring that information to the public.

The present dominant form of War Journalism portrays conflict as a series of big bangs, with little in between. By filling in those gaps, and drawing attention to the peace work that is already going on, Peace Journalism is giving peace a chance.

The trainees from the Kabul workshops went back to their newsrooms, determined to try their best to work these angles in to their own reporting and their own media. That means ensuring that, when violent incidents are reported, readers and audiences receive adequate backgrounds and contexts, which enable them to appreciate the potential and the arguments for nonviolent responses.

The more journalists who join them in Afghanistan, the more of a contribution they will be able to make to the prospects and resources for a more peaceful future.

Professor investigates peaceful sports reporting

By Rachel Villari

A University of British Columbia professor hopes his research will promote peace journalism in the world of sports writing.

Kinesiology Professor Brian Wilson is conducting his third major grant-funded research project, this time investigating ways that sports writing could be more helpful in promoting peace through positive representations of sport.

Wilson argues that, in changing the way stories are told about sports, the media can positively influence their readership.

“Our ultimate goal is to speak with journalists about how we, as sociologists of sport, might make a contribution to help foster the growth of peace-promoting journalism, what we’re calling sport journalism for peace, in up-and-coming sport journalists,” said Wilson.

Fair and unbiased

Wilson coined the term “sport journalism for peace” after learning about peace journalism during a research leave at the United Nations University for Peace in Costa Rica.

Peace journalism encourages fair and unbiased coverage, ethics most journalists strive for but can’t always

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hopes to one day edit and manage content for a sports publication.

achieve. However, not all coverage is created equal. Because sports serves as a stage on which race, class, privilege and gender all play, such prejudiced undertones can sometimes be present in sports writing (most of the time subconsciously), and thus these polarizing concepts can sometimes become embedded in society.

“Sport is one cultural space where issues of race, gender, disability—among others—can be analyzed,” he said. “You can see what role it plays in reinforcing problems that may exist outside or the extent to which it might illuminate them or exaggerate them.”

At first, Wilson’s attempt to explore whether sport—based on the premise of challenge and triumphs and failures—creates an opportunity for peace journalism where it does not already exist may seem counterintuitive. But Wilson presses on.

Sociologists study sport to try to understand how it relates to issues in the broader society.

“Sport is a major part of culture, and whether people are interested in it or not they are most certainly impacted by it,” said Wilson.

As those responsible for relaying information from the world of sports to the public, the media play a big role in continuing this cycle. Wilson intends to collaborate with sports journalists to explore this influence further.

The language of sports

Media serve as the vehicle that links the public to the players. Kevin Campbell, a sports reporter of the Prince Rupert Northern Review, thinks that journalists are in a unique position with access to both the exclusive sporting culture and the broader, social culture at large within society.



Professor Brian Wilson

Campbell understands that the primary function of the media is to bring an event of importance to its readers.

“There’s a surface level to sports that you can watch and take in as a viewer,” he said. “But sports reporters actively try and go beneath it to find stories.”

How they write and what they choose to write about affects the audience, too, and Wilson wants to investigate ways in which positive, peace-promoting effects might be introduced.

But people like Travis Paterson of the Saanich News question whether or not that is possible.

“No time for it,” was his first reaction to peace journalism, although he admitted to empathizing with the motivation behind it.

“I personally try to stay away from language that militarizes sport, like using words like ‘battle’ and things of that nature, and I think a lot of that lies with the reporter’s morals. But, my immediate response is to be scared off. It just doesn’t sound manageable,” Paterson said.

It seems then, that there is a gap between theory and practice. “I believe in it,” said Paterson. “That’s the main

Rongo journalists avoid inflaming conflicts

By Fredrick Ogenga

In a recent Regional Peace and Reconciliation Journalism workshop held at Rongo University organized by the Center for Global Peace Journalism at Park University, Rongo University, and the East African Foundation for Peace Journalism, a general theme that came up is how not to “put petrol of the fire” when reporting terrorism. This was emphasized by one of the facilitators, Prof. Steven Youngblood.

The same theme appeared in Arusha Tanzania at an African Peace-building Network Workshop (APN) organized by Social Science Research Council (SSRC), Africa Leadership Center (ACL) and International Law and Policy Institute (ILPI), where delegates generally agreed “To Leave Peace Alone” in the words of one of the resource persons, Prof. Gilbert Khadiagala.

The Prof. argued that people have spent a lot of energy focusing on defining peace and how to make peace possible so much so that they have interfered with peace. Most studies on peace and conflicts have focused on



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Reporting students in Rongo, Kenya learn the basics of PJ.

the root causes of conflict which have acted as ideological traps that have prevented innovative approaches or solution oriented strategies in peacebuilding. The argument, which defined the discourse in the workshop, is that it does not take a rocket scientist to establish the root causes of conflict in Africa. The point is clear, people know them. So what should they be focusing on then?

Instead of dwelling on approaches that have failed just because they make it “in the knowlegde reservoir “ of mainstream western academic discourses of peace and conflict regarding Africa, people should think out of the box and try new innovative methodologies which speak to the contextual realities in Africa. Take the media for example and the reporting of terrorism, if journalists would understand that terrorism thrives due to publicity, they would not signify it sensationally through the scary images and emotional

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Sports from Pg 13

thing. I think it’s just about how you can implement it... if you can make it applicable on a wider scale.”

Innovative methods

Professor Wilson is a realist. He understands that what he is curious about is an ideal. He understands that peace journalism is a complex and rigorous reform to expect journalists to sign on with, and therein lies the challenge: making peace journalism the norm so that reversing prejudiced undertones becomes common practice and not another obstacle for the writer’s game recap to clear.

“I’m not a journalist,” said Wilson. “So my first response is to ask more questions as to why peace journalism may be seen as a daunting practice and to find out more...There are still debates around it and we know not everybody thinks it’s practical,” he said. “We’re still exploring the extent to which it is even useful for people who do sport; we don’t actually know as of right now.”

Entering the second year of his research, Wilson intends to unite theory and practice, interviewing and collaborating with sports journalists to better understand what might constitute a better form of sports writing. Further, he hopes the two groups can work to develop innovative methods for teaching this new style that bring together sociologists of sport and journalists.



(L) The University of Rongo is located in beautiful southwestern Kenya. (R) Professional journalists edit their peace-themed radio stories.



Rongo from Pg 14

language via the global mainstream media – if this fact is taken for granted then such reporting would only work to undermine strategies put in place to defeat it. This was a subject well covered in the regional peace and reconciliation journalism convention held in Rongo University.

This kind of reporting creates fear and anxiety in the minds of audiences. In Africa, we are increasingly witnessing a surge in asymmetric conflicts where terrorism creates ungovernable spaces in countries such as Nigeria, Camroon, Kenya, Mali, Somalia and so on.

The problem is that the media in Africa have followed a Western trend employing a journalism of bandwagonism and mimicry. Take Kenya’s Operations against insecurity and terrorism code named Operation Linda Nchi or Operation Protect the Nation and Operation Usalama Watch or Operation Security Watch for example, the media have been accused of putting petrol on the fire and worsening state’s effort to defeat terror. Media is one of the most crucial institutions in democracy (the fourth estate) designed to play a watchdog function and be a custodian of national interest – security

The media is therefore obliged to play its watchdog function in matters security to ensure it shines the light of publicity, according to Youngblood, by clamping down the heat a little bit for peace-building. However, this will be impossible until African journalists and journalists in Africa find their own philosophy of news coverage premised on African gnosis to report in a manner that considers the contextual realities in the continent which calls for a radical departure from Western sensationalism.

The African solution to this would be to agree on the universalism of good journalism in Peace Journalism and

proceed to argue that Peace Journalism premised on good journalism can be the ideological seedbed of conceptualizing an African journalistic philosophy and ideology (Hybrid Peace Journalism or HPJ) that infuse African wisdom to invent approaches that would be cognizant of the need for peace on the continent in the context of the emerging threat of terror and other traditional forms of conflict.

Radio and institutions of higher learning like Rongo University’s Center for Media, Democracy, Peace and Security perhaps have the best chance of making peace a reality.



Peace Journalist Gloria Laker (PJ Foundation of East Africa) presents basics of PJ to students at Rongo Unviersity.

Negative narratives common in Comoros media

By Daniel Brown

Since independence from France forty years ago, the Union of the Comoros is an archipelago nation constituted of three volcanic islands in the Indian Ocean. A fourth, Mayotte, voted in 1975 to break off from its ancestral homeland and stay under French jurisdiction. This was a controversial referendum denounced by the United Nations as illegal as accusations flew of gerrymandering and deportations of opponents to the separation.

Since then, UN resolutions have repeatedly called on Paris to re-integrate Mayotte into the Comoros, which are located between Mozambique and Madagascar. Both entities are beset with problems of identity, clandestine emigration, urban unrest and diplomatic crises. Mayotte is one of France's most violent and poorest départements. The Comoros, meanwhile, has been infamously unstable with 20 coups or attempted coups in 40 years.

Alarmingly, since 1995 an estimated 20,000 Comorans have drowned in their quests to cross the Mozambique strait and penetrate illegally Mayotte, a land mass just 70 kilometers away.

Daniel Brown has been reporting on Africa for over 20 years, notably for *Radio France International*. He has led several workshops promoting accurate and unbiased news reporting notably in Cameroon, Ghana, Nigeria and Ethiopia.



These treacherous waters divide one of Africa's confetti states from an island now labelled an "Ultra-Peripheral Region" of the European Union. Desperate Comoran youth repeatedly risking death by taking fragile boats called kwassa-kwassa ("fast-fast" in Shikomor, the local Swahili-related language). Once they arrive, many are subjected to violent manhunts by both French police and local vigilante groups. Indeed, racial tensions have sprouted between the islands despite the fact they have shared the same language, culture and history ever since the first Sultanates were established there in the 11th century.

Yet, courageous grassroots and citizen initiatives are attempting to bridge the divide between the two populations. None more so than a biannual contemporary arts festival, Hudjijuwa, or the Festival of Contemporary Arts in the Comoros, FACC. According to its cofounder Fatima Oussen, the event aims at "restructuring the archipelago's identity since (her) people have become deconstructed by a Berlin wall built across the ocean."

Last May, hundreds of works were exhibited by 70 international artists intent on dialogue and creativity which would end the isolation of the two entities.

The festival is one of several re-

sponses to a festering conflict which a peace journalism program could usefully cover. Other local initiatives are making inroads. They include plans by local production company Ahja Prod (<http://ahjaprod.com/r%C3%A9alisations.html>) to create a new independent television company. And there are the remarkable theatrical works of Comoran author, playwright and musician Soeuf Elbadawi addressing conflict issues sprouting from the Mayotte-Comoros divide (http://fr.wikipedia.org/wiki/Soeuf_Elbadawi and <https://muzdalifahouse.wordpress.com/>).

In January 2015, Elbadawi resurrected the age-old Comoran tradition of shungu to unite local and foreign writers around new concepts of governance and fraternity against the nepotism that has stymied his country's development since independence.

This comes during a period of legislative and regional elections which will once again test the fraught cohabitation among the islands. A 2002 initiative to create a revolving presidency which allows a representative from each island to take the helm for four years is being challenged. At the time of writing, the first round of legislative elections on January 25 had the populist candidate Ahmed Abdallah Sambi and his Juwa party ahead. Sambi is a controversial figure, touted to take the presidency in 2016 even though, under the rotation law he hopes to change, he would not be eligible. It is an office Sambi already held between 2006 and 2011.

January's vote saw a strong and peaceful turn-out for the Comoros' first elections in six years. But tensions have gone up a notch since the October 31 2014 shutdown in protest at electricity and water cuts which have plagued the country for almost a

Continued on next page

Greek media contribute to immigrant stereotypes

By Naya Kalfeli

Hate speech and racist crime, largely attributed to the rise of the neo-Nazi party Golden Dawn, has increased in Greece since 2009. Hit by an unprecedented financial crisis, the Greek society has been, at the same time, swept away by an acute political crisis, rising political polarization and the sway of a rampant populism; the latter feeding on fear but also cultivating fear: fear for the future, for social security, for unemployment, for the deterioration of living conditions, for loss of national identity and sovereignty, fear of the «Other».

This fear, reinforced by the rise of the immigration influx towards Greece (over the last decade, Greece has become the major gateway into the

EU for undocumented migrants and asylum-seekers from Asia and Africa) and by the fact that the Greek government lacked the control, understanding, legal framework and a solid mechanism to deal with the immigration crisis, led to scapegoating, a common phenomenon during times of crises. The stereotypical ideas that many Greeks hold for decades about many groups of immigrants were awakened and foreigners have been thought to be responsible for the current crisis.

The Greek media have contributed to these stereotypical notions about immigrants by employing a war journalism model to portray the migration

Continued on next page

Comoros from Pg 16

year. The general strike was repeated on February 9, when 90% of the businesses closed. The ongoing economic slump has pushed more people to risk their lives on the kwassa-kwassa with catastrophic consequences.

The media in the Comoros and Mayotte have done little to placate the tensions both inside and between the islands. Negative narratives about populations on each side of the Mozambique strait are widespread on the airwaves and in print media. In Mayotte, delinquency figures are linked to clandestine immigration from the Comoros. In Moroni, newspapers inflate the numbers and publish articles rife with negative stereotypes against these refugees (see, for example <http://www.mayotte-observer.com/actualites/la-colonisation-de-mayotte-par-les-comoriens-3433.html>).

"The media have done little to placate the tensions inside and between the islands."

French authorities further fuel anger in the Comoros by expulsions on a massive scale: almost 16,000 were recorded in 2013 (out of a total of 27,000 people expelled by the French nation). This represents 1.2% of the entire Comoran population of under 800,000 (if one were to transpose this to mainland France it would be the equivalent of 1.32 million people!). In 2012, 6,000 of those returned to the Comoros were children while thousands of Comoran adults are forced to leave their children behind to fend for themselves (see <http://www.lacroix.com/Famille/Parents-Enfants/Dossiers/Mayotte-l-ile-aux-enfants-perdus-2014-11-19-1266502>)

There are also inner tensions between the Comoros' three islands Ngazidja, Anjouan and Mohéli. Coexistence and communication are handicapped by a monolithic and sparse media scene in a nation which only saw the birth of a



Naya Kalfeli is currently a doctoral student of peace journalism at Aristotle University of Thessaloniki, Greece, and academic staff of the PJ Laboratory. She has received a BA in Journalism and Mass Communication from Aristotle University and a MA in International Law from Panteion University of Athens.

national television station in 2006 (the last African state to build one). There are only two daily newspapers based in the capital Moroni and a recent study showed that under 20% of the adult population read a newspaper ... per week. The government has tight control of the print press, radio and television and independent journalists are often harassed when reporting. As a result self-censorship is widespread and the subsequent loss of credibility has seen growing numbers turn to social media for information. Stereotypes and communal suspicion, linked to political maneuvering and a complex history between the islands, is also on the rise.

The practice of peace journalism in the archipelago would therefore allow journalists and the organizations they represent to disseminate fairer, more accurate news. With a more professional and dispassionate approach these reporters could thus lay the foundations for inter-island cooperation and a better understanding of the realities in the region.

Greece from Pg 17

crisis. In a seminar launched for journalists and media professionals by Aristotle University (Peace Journalism Laboratory, Department of Journalism and Mass Communication) and the Daily Press Journalists' Association of Northern Greece, in May 2014, the findings on how media cover immigration issues were presented.

These findings showed: A) immigration issues are rarely covered and misreported, B) reference to "burning" issues (eg. detention centers, asylum process, etc.) is made in a superficial and sensational way, C) scarce coverage lacks context, D) no voice is given to immigrants themselves, while E) the illegal activities of foreigners are exaggerated; immigrants suddenly become very visible when their activities are linked to a crime ("Two Albanians killed a Greek" or "Greek Girl Raped by Illegal Pakistani Immigrant"). This crime reporting therefore stigmatizes a whole community.

The seminar's success led to the



Seminar participants discuss how immigration issues are misreported in Greece.

restructure of the "Peace Journalism" course offered by the Aristotle University Department of Journalism on a postgraduate level, which has now embraced the application of peace journalism on diversity issues. Students were called to discuss the way media portray diversity (immigration, religion, sexual orientation, Roma, etc.), and then to re-approach these issues from a peace journalism perspective by producing a series of reports and feature articles on topics of their choice related to diversity. The resulted reports are expected in

early April and will be published on an online platform.

In both cases (the seminar and the PJ course), attendees learned that as journalists, they must be aware of the impact of their reports in reinforcing stereotypes and understand their responsibility in shaping public opinion, attitudes and beliefs. This is a difficult skill for a journalist and requires training, practice and ethics. But this is what peace journalism is about; the choices that need to be made and the values that influence these choices.

Peacebuilders 'Gather' in Jordan, learn about PJ

(Dead Sea, Jordan)--Was the war in Gaza last summer an "operation?" Are those who attack the innocent freedom fighters, terrorists, extremists, or Islamic fundamentalists?

These questions about the use of language by media were on center stage at a Conflict Reporting session



Israeli journalist Yossi Zilberman

at Gather +962, a meeting of peacebuilders sponsored by Seeds of Peace Feb. 26-March 1 in Jordan.

Conflict Reporting attendees learned that peace journalists are always cognizant of the impact of the language they use. For example, that media in Lebanon typically will not use the word Israel, substituting instead the term "the enemy."

Moderator Steven Youngblood also discussed the term "operation" used to label last summer's Gaza war. I pointed out the connotations of the term operation—precision, surgery, sanitary, necessary. Does the word operation accurately describe the Gaza war, or, instead, is it a euphemism or even propaganda designed to sanitize what happened? These

vital questions about the meaning of the words we use are central to any discussion about PJ.

Presenter Yossi Zilberman talked about objectivity and fairness in reporting, and how difficult both are for Israeli journalists. For example, he told a story about covering a provocative flag waving march by right wingers in an Arab city in Israel, and a subsequent clash between police and local Arabs. How does one report such a multi-layered incident without appearing biased?

The final panelist, Pakistani professor Muhammad Ali, presented his study of 9/11 coverage in Pakistani and British newspapers. The findings: The coverage was one sided in both countries.

Hebdo: Explain violence without excusing it

By Steven Youngblood

In the months that have followed the Charlie Hebdo murders, media worldwide have offered up a mixed bag of sensationalism and occasionally insightful coverage.

In examining newspaper coverage from the days following the attacks, the language of sensationalism predominated in headlines that screamed "Bloody Climax" (Times of London), "Massacred in Minutes" (Daily Express), "Barbaric" (Daily Mirror), "War in Paris" (NY Post), "La liberte assassinee" (Paris Normandie), "Morder" (Bild-Germany), "Liberte 0, Barbarie 12" (L'Equipe-France), "They wanted to die martyrs...instead they died as vile, pathetic, murderous scum" (Daily Mirror). Several newspapers covers showed a graphic that extends the middle finger in defiance of the attackers.

What's wrong with these headlines? They certainly capture the anger associated with the attack. However, they do not reflect the array of other emotions ranging from grief to regret to empathy present in the days after the attacks. These sensational headlines (often accompanied by bloody images or inflammatory artwork) do nothing but fuel the fires of anger, and practically beg for an emotional, violent outburst in response to the attacks.

A peace journalism approach, in contrast, would not sugarcoat what happened, but would also not seek to exacerbate an already anger-filled, tense situation.

More responsible headlines after the attacks included "Assault on Democracy" (Guardian), "The world stands with France" (International New York Times), "Manhunt follows terror attack" (Washington Post), "Paris Magazine Attack" (NBC News website).

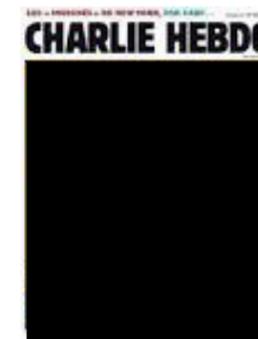
As for the front page images, an unscientific survey of front page images in the days following the attacks shows the dominance of three photos or illustrations. One is the aforementioned cartoon middle finger extended, the second is a photo of a police officer on the ground moments before he was shot, and the third is a surveillance picture of the gunmen leaving their car on the way into the Hebdo building.

These images, while not ideal from a peace journalism standpoint, could be much worse. The middle finger is inflammatory, to be sure. However, the front page pictures could have been so much worse. Imagine the bloody possibilities, including detailed images of the dead and injured. One responsible front page, The Daily Telegraph,

showed the picture of the gunmen with their car, but also had five large photos of some of the victims.

A peace journalist, when considering which images to use, might consider several guidelines that I wrote about several years ago in response to images published in the New York Times of a shooting at the Empire State Building (Peace Journalism Insights, Aug. 24, 2012):

1. Are these images sensational, or are they necessary for a complete understanding of the story?
2. Will these images needlessly inflame passions against a suspect, scuttling his right to a fair trial?
3. What about the families of the victims? Should we consider their feelings before we publish?
4. Do the pictures in any way glorify the crime, making it (in a sick way) attractive to copycats?



In terms of the content of the coverage, one key tenet of peace journalism is rejecting the traditional media narrative of "us vs. them," which is an oversimplified, inaccurate reporting construct. In the aftermath of the attack, reporters, commentators, and bloggers all too often seized the opportunity to promulgate their stale, East vs. West or Muslim vs. Christian narratives. These traditional narratives

are deliberately polarizing, and do nothing but fuel more animosity.

Peace journalists would explore the legitimate grievances behind those who opposed Charlie Hebdo, without giving justification to the violence perpetrated against the newspaper. Responsible journalists should explain the violence and its context without excusing it. There was one encouraging sign in the coverage: The most important underlying issue explaining the attacks, the nature of blasphemy, was explored in depth by a number of responsible media outlets like New York magazine (Jan. 7), the Huffington Post (Jan. 26), and the Washington Post (Jan. 19).

Traditional media have, unfortunately, successfully created an inaccurate, one-dimensional, superficial narrative that depicts the world's 1.6-billion Muslims as a single minded, monolithic entity. Peace journalism should present Islam in a more accurate, multi-faceted manner that reflects its diversity.

The Charlie Hebdo incident, tragic though it may be, continues to offer Western media an opportunity to broaden and enhance the media portrayal of Islam while leading a discussion about the chilling effect the murders have had on legitimate public discourse about religion.

Study recommends integrating PJ into curriculum

By *Rukhsana Aslam*

The past few years have seen significant conceptualisation of peace journalism by scholars but there is still much left to explore in its practical application in both in journalism practice and journalism education.

The role of media in conflict: Integrating peace journalism in the journalism curriculum (<http://aut.researchgate-way.ac.nz/handle/10292/7908>) is a step in that direction. It is a four-year doctoral study that suggests possible models for 'what' and 'how' to teach peace journalism. It argues in favour of peace journalism as an alternate professional paradigm for journalists to help educate and inform the audiences, correct misperceptions, build confidences and voice options for peaceful resolution of conflict in society. Drawing on some of the principles of conflict resolution and conflict transformation, journalists can view, interpret, source and narrate conflicts in ways that ultimately help transform conflict and lead it towards resolution. They can thus play a more constructive role in conflict.

The study examines peace journalism from three perspectives: how the journalists regard conflict reporting and what they think is lacking in the contemporary journalism curriculum; what the conflict resolution workers and educators see as relevant to the journalism profession; and the view of the peace journalism academics about how peace journalism can complement over all journalism education and training.

Participatory Action Research (PAR), with three cycles of planning, action and reflection, was chosen as the appropriate methodology because of the interactive role that the various

actors, such as the journalists, the peace workers and the academics, play in developing the perception and understanding of the general audience. The approach was also useful in allowing the researcher to be an active participant thus helping her to utilise her own experience as a journalist and an academic.

A content analysis of what was available in terms of peace journalism education in the universities was conducted, along with interviews with twelve international journalists, conflict resolution workers and academics. These helped to find out about the on-ground journalism practices and coverage of the conflicts; what was lacking in it from the perspective of peace workers and academics; and how could these be improved and included into the journalism curriculum.

In the light of the data collected, answers to three questions were sought: (i) Can peace journalism be a means of integrating conflict resolution into the journalism curriculum? (ii) Can the

“Can PJ be a means of integrating conflict resolution into journalism curriculum?”

ideals of peace journalism be translated into professional practices? And (iii) can the principles of conflict analysis, conflict resolution and conflict transformation be

integrated into journalism curriculum using the journalistic tools and practices?

The author presents three original models in her argument: The inverted trident of peace journalism consolidates the various approaches of peace journalism into a single model; CAUSE: the generic model for peace journalism that brings together various elements to design a unit/paper on it; and the Investigative Journalism- Peace Journalism (IJ-PJ) Model that links the two strands so that they

Dr. Rukhsana Aslam is a journalist and media educator from Pakistan living in New Zealand. Attached to the Pacific Media Centre in Auckland University of Technology (AUT), New Zealand, she graduated with a doctorate in peace journalism in the School of Communication Studies in December 2014 and has been working closely with the National Centre



for Peace and Conflict Resolution at Otago University, New Zealand.

can be mutually beneficial. Together, these models signify the conceptual understanding of peace journalism; how to translate its values and ideals into tangibles; and how to implement them in a practical manner.

The conclusions drawn and the recommendations made by the researcher point towards further action and research in this area. She concludes that a synergised media strategy needs to be established between the journalists, educators, peace workers and researchers to use the mainstream media space by employing the journalistic creativity that peace journalism offers. The recommendations are not region or country specific; rather they can be applied to region's specific needs, concerns and resources. Indeed the study argues in favour of having generic models for not only understanding peace journalism approaches but also implementing it within the journalism curriculum without imposing national or regional boundaries on it.

The study is conducted in the broader canvas of media and conflict but the

Continued on next page

www.park.edu/peacecenter

Media transform public opinion during disasters

By *Mohid Iftikhar*

Natural calamities in Pakistan trigger an environment with arduous challenges. Such events occur without warning, but promulgation of forced migration, diseases, damage to infrastructure and loss of human lives is significant. In context of disseminating information, journalism previously depicted government's role as phlegmatic. Hence, a belligerent attitude from the public was a consequence.

Reponses from the media transform mindsets, and negative or positive social dynamics emerge. Peace journalism aims at allowing opportunities within a society where progressive public spheres evolve, thus encouraging citizens to learn beyond normative stereotypes.

Recent catastrophes, where floods and earthquakes made Pakistan vulnerable, peace journalism harnessed a direction where political stability was defined. Emphasis was laid on roles of the government, civil society, parliament and the military that reflected a unified society.

Curriculum study from Pg 20

researcher's personal experiences as a journalist and later as an academic in Pakistan provide relevant contextual background to the objectives of this study. America's so-called 'War on Terror' was a daily living reality in her home country from 2003 onwards until she came to New Zealand in 2010 for her research. The researcher's perspective of the conflict at personal level was formed after years of living through the political upheaval, social unrest and countless suicide bombings in her city Islamabad, including the one in her institution, the International Islamic University, on October 20, 2009 (www.iiui.edu.pk).

The study does not suggest that enhancing knowledge of conflict resolution is the answer to all ills in the contemporary standards of conflict reporting. A range of factors are presented in the thesis that point to the existing issues and concerns in conflict reporting. Not all of them are directly related to training; some of them are applicable at personal, social or organisational levels such as language or cultural barriers or personal biases. But they do act as contributing factors in making conflict reporting a complex phenomenon for the journalists. The author makes the case for making journalists aware of them as the first step towards finding ways to overcome them.

In the final analysis, the thesis is not about turning journalists into conflict resolution practitioners. The objective is to improve journalism curriculum vis-à-vis the role media plays, and can play in conflicts. Hence it is journalism oriented and sees conflict resolution and transformation as offering practical means to help journalists in reporting conflicts. However, the endeavour is to make an original contribution to the field: the study brings together the different resources on peace journalism; analyses them through a range of perspectives; and suggests various models to understand and implement peace journalism as part of journalism curriculum. Equally important, it offers new possibilities of research for other scholars which can build up to constructive knowledge in this area

Truth from all sides is a key component in peace journalism; since the last decade social cohesion amongst all members of the society has been promoted during natural hazards. Regardless of flaws in the political system, bureaucracy and disaster management structures, a culture has been communicated through peace journalism where partisans of harmony represent all Pakistanis as concerned citizens.

Technological advances surpass conventional media, as peace journalism injects the youth of Pakistan for understanding sense of citizenship and humanity during unavoidable circumstances. Efforts of political parties, the military and civil society are communicated by patriotic symbols of colors, poetry and songs in news paper articles and electronic media, where campaigns of national integration in times of crisis are indicated. Such instances identify the increasing role of peace journalism and positive changes in psycho-social dynamics.

The unforeseen events by the nature

have their grave effects on human lives, leaving families broken, properties destroyed, and businesses closed. The psychological trauma releases fear, despair and isolation.

Perhaps, now peace journalism is on the path of setting a mark where members of the Pakistani society show genuine concerns, no matter which path of life they come from, help through relief goods or financial assistance circulates through informal and formal circles. It wouldn't be wise to chalk out the cons, but it is essential to recognize how peace journalism gradually is promoting a sense of responsibility which in turn supports national integration.

Mohid Iftikhar holds a Masters of Philosophy in Peace & Conflict Studies degree from National Defence



University Pakistan. Currently he is working as a Principal Staff Officer at Dawood University in Pakistan.

Media's role in peace examined in Lebanon

By Vanessa Bassil

The Media Association for Peace (MAP) and the MasterPeace club of Lebanon held their Annual Peace Journalism 2014 workshop entitled "The Role of Media in Peace Building and Conflict Transformation in Lebanon", from Dec. 11-13 2014 at AltCity, Hamra, Beirut, for the fourth year in a row.

Activists in the communication field and media students from different Lebanese universities and various religious and political backgrounds took part in this workshop.

The first day, introduced by the Founder and Director of MAP and Country Coordinator of MasterPeace-Lebanon, Vanessa Bassil, tackled the role of media in divided societies and the actual situation of the Lebanese media outlets. Participants also defined the responsibility of media in understanding conflicts and using the appropriate tools to analyze it and reveal its background and framework for the public opinion. This exercise exposed the fact that media in Lebanon lack professional and knowledgeable standards in portray-

ing conflicts and that it is necessary to induce a reform campaign to spread the concept and principles of Peace Journalism which is oriented towards peace, people, truth and solutions. The workshop also stressed the idea that Peace journalism aims at explaining- not justifying- violence in all its forms.

The second day revolved around analyzing the headlines of the 7th of May 2008 incidents in both Lebanese newspapers: Al Akhbar and Al Mostaqbal, using the criteria of Peace and War journalism as a reference. (May 7th is a political conflict that happened in Beirut in 2008 between two sectarian groups and led to the death of dozens of people). Participants then devised an action plan with the trainer Hussein Itany, an expert in the field of corporate communication, about how to cover events in times of conflict.

After that, the two journalists, Safaa Ayad from NBN TV and Faten Jebai from Al Iman TV, shared their personal experiences as Peace Journalists in religious and political media outlets and the possibility of implementing



MAP is the Media Association for Peace, the first non-governmental organization in Lebanon, the Middle East and North Africa region dedicated to work on the role of Media in Peace, Conflict and Social Change through the concept of Peace Journalism. It is a non-partisan, non-governmental, youth-led organization, founded in 2013 by the Lebanese Young Peace Journalists group, created by the journalist and peace activist Vanessa Bassil (bassil.vanessa@gmail.com).

Peace Journalism in Lebanon, especially after their participation in MAP Peace Journalism workshops in the previous years.

During the last day, Mohammad Mohsen, reporter in Russia Today TV, talked about the gap between professional journalistic standards, personal beliefs and institutional policies, taking his field experience as a real-life example. In addition, workshop participants discussed the relationship between peace-oriented media and human rights, particularly women's rights, and undertook training with the journalist Elias Bassil, MAP member and participant in previous Peace Journalism workshops, about covering gender-based violence and the role of media in implementing the United Nations Security Council Resolution 1325 about Women, Peace and Security. Moreover, Sandra

Continued on next page



Debating the merits of peace journalism at MAP's seminar in Beirut, Lebanon.

Peacebuilding media from Pg 22

Whitehead, lecturer at Rafik Hariri University, talked about the role of storytelling as a tool for peace. Finally, participants learned with Zeina Merhi, MAP team member, about Media Literacy and its importance in complementing and putting peace journalism into action.

The workshop was characterized by interaction between participants and covered both the theoretical and practical side of peace journalism. It ended with attendees devising a future action plan to develop this concept through their activities. MAP's team distributed certificates for participants after an evaluative session of the workshop.

Feedback from some participants:
 "As a journalist-to-be I have attended many workshops. MAP's workshop was the best experience on the personal level. It has highlighted the gaps in the Lebanese media, how they report conflicts, and how would peace journalism report it. Moreover, the activities we did during the workshop were also effective since we were working everytime with a new group. Creating new interactions to build connections with future journalists was a major asset in this workshop. All the speakers were influential, especially MAP Founder, Ms Vanessa Bassil, who has given us hope for building peace by explaining the meaning and application of peace journalism, not only theoretically, but also through life experience examples. Thank you MAP for that amazing opportunity!"

--Ilham Fanous, Journalism student, Notre Dame University, Lebanon

"My experience was really amazing! I wasn't expecting that I'll learn that much about peace journalism. The workshop was one of the greatest experiences I've ever had. It helped me a lot in dealing with different kinds of



MAP's peace journalism seminar in Beirut, Lebanon featured both group work and discussion (top) and individual projects (below).

issues in my daily life. I can see now things from different perspectives before judging".

--Aya Amkieh, Journalism student, American University of Sciences and Technology, Lebanon

MAP Biography:
 Media Association for Peace- MAP (www.mapmena.org) is the first NGO in Lebanon and MENA region dedicated to work on Peace Journalism through training, advocacy, research and publications. It is an independent

youth-led organization registered in Beirut in 2013. MAP's vision is to get to a media that play an essential role in peacebuilding especially in conflict and post-conflict areas while enhancing Human Rights, Dialogue, Reconciliation, Development, Environmental awareness, Gender Equality and Social Justice in order to reach a more peaceful, less violent world.

You can contact MAP Founder, Ms Vanessa Bassil on: vanessa.bassil@maplebanon.org

Nigerian trainings stress electoral reporting

By Joseph Olusegun Adebayo

Background

Nigeria's media has the potential to be divided along ethnic and religious lines. Given that most Nigerians view political aspirants in terms of their ethnic and religious affiliation rather than political ideology, and since most Nigerians rely on the media for information, there is often the tendency to fall prey to biased and insensitive reportage capable of inciting violence. This is because majority of the populace are often vulnerable to prejudiced information often subtly presented as news, features, commentaries, documentaries etc.

This aforementioned problem formed the major motivation behind my embarking on the research which seeks to build the capacity of journalists in Nigeria to report elections in a conflict-sensitive manner.

The rising wave of violence in Nigeria as witnessed in the agitation for greater resource control by militants in Nigeria's Niger Delta region and the acts of terrorism perpetrated by the militant Islamists group Boko Haram

in Northern Nigeria have made Nigeria a violence-prone society. In her analysis of electoral violence in conflict societies, Hoglund (2006) identifies certain precipitants of violence with regards to elections, particularly in conflict-prone states like Nigeria. One of the precipitants is the design of electoral systems and administration and media reportage.

This training is very crucial considering that Nigeria is in transition towards a general election in 2015 that will probably determine her continual existence as a united country. This study is also important because it would provide Nigerian journalists with the necessary peace journalism skills that would foster peace building activities and nonviolent elections in Nigeria.

The training

The training which took place in Kwara State, North-Central Nigeria involved 40 journalists from all the major media outfits in the state. Training facilitators include Dr. Saulat Abdulbaqi of the department of mass communication at the University of Ilorin, Dr. Joseph Fayeye of the Centre

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nology, South Africa where he is studying for a doctorate degree in peace building (with focus on peace journalism).

for Peace and Strategic Studies at the University of Ilorin, and Joseph Olusegun Adebayo, a doctorate research student in peace building at Durban University of Technology who was the convener and lead facilitator.

The modules

Participants were taught three modules; the first module, which was facilitated by Dr. Fayeye was titled understanding conflicts. The first module sought to give participants a clear understanding of the term conflict, its causes, the relationship between journalists' reportage and societal peace or conflict and the qualities of a journalist with respect to impartiality, accuracy and responsibility.

The second module, facilitated by Joseph Adebayo provided clear understanding of the term peace journalism, the difference between traditional (war) journalism and peace journalism and an exposition of Jake Lynch and Annabel McGoldrick's 17 point plan for peace journalism.

The last module was facilitated by Dr. Saulat Abdulbaqi. She helped participants to clearly identify the important issues that need attention of the

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40 journalists learned about PJ in North-Central Nigeria.

PJ practiced at Rwandan English newspaper

By Ashley Harbin

During the Fall 2014 semester, I took advantage of an opportunity to study abroad in Rwanda via the School of International Training's Post-Genocide Restoration and Peacebuilding program. While in Rwanda, I studied the nation's history and reconstruction process following the 1994 Genocide against the Tutsis, as well as lived with a host family and conducted a month long independent research project. I decided to incorporate my peace journalism educational background into the independent research project, and the results were astounding.

The one-month project focused on various components of the primary English newspaper in Rwanda in order to explore the opportunities and challenges of English print media in Rwanda. Every article in one issue of the newspaper The New Times was assessed based on the peace journalism content



analysis rubric (found at <http://www.park.edu/center-for-peace-journalism/>).

Interviews were conducted to assess how comfortable the journalists from the news house were with journalism ethics and their ability to produce articles that portrayed peace journalism.

After reviewing the research results, I concluded that the

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media during the electoral process and the professional way of covering them. She also emphasized the need to be fair, impartial and objective in their reportage, and discussed ways to sensitize the public on the need to be peaceful and non-violent throughout the electoral process.

Syndicate sessions

For each of the modules, participants were broken into syndicate groups. Each group was presented with a flip chart or board where they wrote down ways through which they can foster nonviolent elections through their reportage. The facilitators then used the methods that emerge from the groups to prepare a code of conduct for journalists.



In Kigali, a committee discussed the validity of a BBC documentary about Rwanda.

young media industry is the primary insinuator for a variety of opportunities while the country's dark history is the root of the majority of challenges.

Following 1994, Rwanda essentially started back at square one and the nation was reformed. This provided a new beginning for many industries, including the media. The training for journalists continues to grow, but during conversations with the journalists it was apparent that they knew the essential ethics and practiced them (for example using

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At the Nigerian training, modules included the impact of reporting on society.



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unbiased and anti-inflammatory vocabulary in articles.). The education for journalism in Rwanda is also developing, leading the belief that the practices and ethics of the journalists will only increase as a result of better training and skills development.



In addition, due to the negative media's influence and impact during the genocide, the media has a self-regulating body, which has no tolerance for journalists who may jeopardize the country's progress.

In October 2014, the BBC broadcast a documentary entitled "Rwanda: The Untold Story," which showcased accusations and events that had the potential to regress the nation by provoking violence and riots. During my study I was able to observe the committee that was immediately put in place following the broadcast of the documentary. Essentially the committee was designed to evaluate the truth of the statements presented in the documentary and assess what the next step was as far as persecuting individuals who broke a variety of laws including one commonly known as the genocide ideology law. The presence of such a group of people committed to providing accurate information to the commonwealth in order to ensure Rwanda's progress is seen as an opportunity for peace journalism in Rwanda.

The most astounding feature of the research results was the newspaper's peace journalism scores. Approximately 81% of the articles analyzed fell into the category of peace journalism; the remaining portrayed qualities of both peace and traditional journalism. Without any article falling in the category of purely traditional journalism, the English print media's presence in Rwanda is certainly having a positive impact on the community and assisting with keeping the peace.

It could be argued that many first world countries do not have media as unbiased as the findings from Rwanda's English media indicate. The biggest contributor to articles that had lower peace journalism scores was that the articles only contained interviews from one source.

Due to the negative impact that the media had by encour-
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aging the genocide, many people still feel very uncomfortable with talking to reporters and having their name in any form of media. This seems to be the biggest challenge in the journalism field in Rwanda, but the exposure for social media is assisting in diminishing that issue.

Overall, the opportunities outnumber the challenges of peace journalism in English print media in post-genocide Rwanda. The opportunities are overwhelmingly present for individuals that equip themselves with the knowledge and expertise to succeed in the media culture of Rwanda as well as push the new industry to a new level of professionalism.

One of the interviewees summed up his view of the opportunities by stating, "If you are creative, you can be innovative." Regarding the few challenges present, many simply require time, exposure to media, and sensitization to the media's purpose and role in society. Access to technology has assisted in increased media exposure by way of social media, and it is likely this trend will continue to increase and assist.

"The best solution is to form regulations to set a standard for payment of journalists."

As far as the issues pertaining to inadequate compensation and many journalists' lacking training in media prior to entering employment as a reporter, I believe the best solution is forming regulations to set a standard for payment of journalists and requirements to enter Rwanda's journalism field. Based on my research, despite the challenges, I am very confident that Rwanda's English print journalists are capable of achieving peace journalism in their writing and have in many ways already done so.

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Peacebuilding program in Rwanda in 2014. Ashley plans to study peace building in graduate school with hopes of helping decrease African tribal conflicts.