IN THIS ISSUE

• Reports from Mexico, Palestine, Libya, Kenya, Nigeria, Gaza, Afghanistan, Bronx,
• Guinea-Bissau journalists visit Rhode Island university
• Peace researchers gather in Istanbul

SPECIAL REPORT: Searching for Peace Journalism in Ferguson, MO
Peace Journalism is when editors and reporters make choices that improve the chaos and identify meaningful pathways forward. Reporters are facing a growing number of challenges. They’re tasked with telling a nuanced narrative that has been complicated by racial tensions, civil unrest, arrests, tear gas, and a lack of information. For all the challenges it presents, the story also offers journalists an opportunity to tell community-based narratives that help people make sense of the chaos and identify meaningful pathways forward.

Peace Journalism is when editors and reporters make choices that improve the public’s understanding of peace initiatives and non-violent solutions more visible and viable.

St. Louis Public Radio journalist Mallary Tenore says these cities have learned the importance of quickly releasing information, cultivating relationships with civic and religious leaders, and stopping violence before it gets out of hand. Peace journalists have come out of it bigger and better.

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.

By Mallary Tenore

As news in Ferguson, Missouri, continues to develop, reporters and photographers are facing a growing number of challenges. They’re tasked with telling a nuanced narrative that has been complicated by racial tensions, civil unrest, arrests, tear gas, and a lack of information. For all the challenges it presents, the story also offers journalists an opportunity — to tell community-based narratives that help people make sense of the chaos and identify meaningful pathways forward.

Journalists don’t need to have all the answers. But they can share lessons from other communities that Ferguson can learn from. The New York Times did this in a piece that explains how Cincinnati, Oakland, Los Angeles, and Miami have dealt with similar situations involving police who shot unarmed black men.

Times reporters Erica Goode and Michael Wines say these cities have learned the importance of quickly releasing information, cultivating relationships with civic and religious leaders, and stopping violence before it gets out of hand.

Oakland rioted in 2009 after a Bay Area Rapid Transit officer shot and killed an unarmed black teenager — by accident, he said — as he lay on the ground. The officer immediately resigned and initially refused to talk to the authorities, but the transit agency met with residents and listened to complaints about the shooting for six hours, then agreed to review its policing procedures.

In Miami in 1989, rioting began in the mostly African-American neighbor-
Sensational Ferguson coverage lacks context; fuels stereotypes

By Steven Youngblood

Seldom have the stakes been higher for the media as they moved in to cover the Michael Brown shooting in Ferguson, Missouri in August. Responsible coverage could help inform and empower the community to react non-violent-ly, while irresponsible coverage could fuel the flames while demonizing Brown and re-victimizing his family.

There was some productive, analytical coverage. Examples include “Violence in Ferguson Didn’t Have to Happen,” (Kansas City Star, 8-17), a CNN town hall meeting about race in America (8-19), and an insightful NPR report about the living amidst the turmoil in Ferguson (8-19).

However, much of the Ferguson coverage was superficial, sensational, and lacking context, while feeding well-worn stereotypes about the tear gas and arrests are important, but it’s worth asking: To what end? At what point do we as journalists resist the media narrative of young black men as criminals and thugs, a narrative borne out by researchers (Opportunity Agenda, etc.), and illustrated by the video over and over, leaving a powerful negative impression on the viewer that no words or disclaimers could wash away.

More responsible reporting using a peace journalism framework would not blame the victim, either overtly or implicitly. It also would not demonize the officer who shot Brown until a full accounting of what happened is revealed. Better reporting would give a broader range of peacemakers a voice, and explore in depth possible short and long term solutions to the crisis in Ferguson. More responsible coverage would eschew the sensational, live video of the stand-off—incessant coverage that overshadowed the much larger issues of race and justice.

Better still, media could have proactively spotlighted the striking racial imbalance in Ferguson between the police (50 of 53 police officers are white) and the population (67% African-American) months or years ago, and in the process encouraged a much-needed dialogue between officials and citizens in Ferguson.

Given the tone and volume of the reporting, it’s hard to conclude that media coverage didn’t exacerbate the crisis in Ferguson, Missouri.

Peace Journalism and Covering Civic Unrest

Tips: Be proactive before violent unrest occurs—facilitate dialogues, offer a platform to the marginalized, and contextualize reporting about contentious incidents between officials and citizens.

Reporting in general:
1. Provide analysis and context, not just play-by-play;
2. Give a platform to the voiceless;
3. Avoid official propaganda, or at least offer critical analysis of this propaganda;
4. Avoid us-vs-them characterizations (Black vs. White, Christian vs. Muslim, etc.);
5. Report about the invisible effects of violence;
6. Use non inflammatory, non-sensational language;
7. Report counter-narratives that offer non-traditional perspectives on all the players involved;
8. Give peacemakers a voice and report about sustainable solutions (not just cease-fires).

Leonard also spoke with Dan Wentz, a Ferguson veterinarian who had to board up one of his office windows after it was shattered during the riots. On the board, he wrote: “Ferguson Proud.”

“That’s how I feel,” Wentz said. “It really hurts to see the bad press that Ferguson’s getting because I believe this is not a reflection of what Ferguson is.”

Wentz has worked in Ferguson for more than two decades and says his customers are racially and ethnically diverse. “It’s a very nice, diverse community,” he told Leonard. “People get along. They cooperate.”

Ferguson resident Molly Rockamann told Leonard: “The outpouring of support has been beautiful. On the converse, people all of a sudden are having a fear about Ferguson because of the sensationalized media attention around the lootings. Those are significant things, but Ferguson is not a war zone.”

When we see front-page photos of tear gas being fired into the air, it’s hard not to envision Ferguson as a war zone. Stories about the tear gas and arrests are important, but it’s worth asking: To what end? At what point do we as journalists shift our focus from “what’s happening in Ferguson?” to “what’s possible in Ferguson?”

The public deserves to hear stories that paint a more accurate picture of Ferguson and that show what it can learn from other communities.

Ultimately, stories like these can give people hope — and provide them with insights about how to respond to difficult situations in ways that will strengthen the community rather than tear it apart.

The coverage of Brown typifies the media narrative of young black men as criminals and thugs, a narrative borne out by researchers (Opportunity Agenda, etc.), and illustrated by the press’ treatment of the convenience store robbery video. Most media responsibly noted that the robbery had no connection to the attempted arrest of Brown. Yet as anchors repeated this over and over, they also showed the video over and over, leaving a powerful negative impression on the viewer that no words or disclaimers could wash away.

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October 2014

PJ offers best approach to Boko Haram coverage

By Kirthi Jayakumar

originally published in July, 2014 on insightsonconflict.org

When beginning writing this article, I ran a simple search on Google’s news panel with the words “Boko Haram”. In all the results that ensued, I found three common elements: propaganda, us-versus-them, and a conspicuous absence of peace efforts – three factors that feed into the very quintessence of traditional war journalism.

War journalism is exactly what keeps war alive. It is the fronterunner element that campaigns for the prolonged business of war.

For the uninformed, as the name suggests, War Journalism refers to journalism that is focused on war, and encourages a presentation that: (1) is heavily oriented towards violence and in projecting the conflict arena in a two-party and one-goal deal; (2) Confines itself to closed spaces and time; (3) Studies the cause and effect only in the conflict arena; 4. Concerns itself only with the visible or tangible effects of violence, making the conflict opaque.

War journalism is skewed toward victory, in that it considers peace and ceasefire as victory while concealing peace initiatives even before victory is at hand.

Traditional war journalism gives up on a war once it is through – not looking at the root of the issue that needs solving – and returns only if the war flares up again.

What War Journalism does is create a hype that gets everyone to say “Never Again” and employs powerful sound-biting hashtags – but it stops with that. Once the conflict is resolved or becomes old news, there is a passive decline regarding concern over the issue, yet nothing was done to understand the root of the problem in the first place. This leaves a sort of Band-Aid on the sore, without any concern for preventing the conflict from happening again.

On the contrary, Peace Journalism doesn’t concern itself with the winner-versus-loser rhetoric, but rather zooms right into the root of the issue. It portrays conflicts in realistic terms and encourages the exploration of backgrounds and contexts of conflict formation. It presents the causes and options of every side involved, without introducing the ‘us’ versus ‘them’ perspective.

Peace journalism effectively serves the purpose by: 1. Being transparent in the representation of the causes, background and issues concerning a conflict; 2. Giving a voice to the rival parties involved and their views; 3. Offering creative ideas that can culminate in conflict resolution, development, peacemaking and peacekeeping; 4. Exposing lies, cover-ups and attempts to cover-up as well as culprits on all sides unequivocally; 5. Revealing the suffering inflicted on people of all parties involved in the conflict; 6. Paying attention to peace stories and efforts for peace; 7. Providing information on post-war developments.

I want a solution, but I have no idea what the solution can be. I don’t know anything beyond the fact that these girls were kidnapped from a school and that the Boko Haram is a group of terrorists that are aligned against Western education. There are undoubtedly scores of efforts being made globally to tackle the issue – but the mainstream media doesn’t tell me about any.

If the narrative had advanced itself from a Peace Journalism perspective, we would have been able to divert our attention to realistic and valuable solutions. We would be able to work strategies that are capable of addressing the undercurrents that motivate the Boko Haram in their activities. Proving my point is this article from The Guardian, which focuses on the coming together of Nigeria’s two most religious groups in an attempt to respond to militancy and terror. It is immaterial what their religious faiths are, as it appears, for they seem to recognise that it is the people who suffered – irrespective of their faith.

This is precisely the problem with the way the world tackles conflict. Peacebuilding is a process that starts from knowledgen. First and foremost, we need an understanding of what has happened and why. Next, we need to identify the kinds of solutions that are practicable given a particular framework concerning the groups involved. The third party in the ladder is to understand the social ethos in which the actors are operating so that the best suited solution can be identified. An external solution often times remains a mere imposition that doesn’t succeed simply because the local community neither owns it, nor identifies with it.

There is no use for Band-Aids as in War Journalism – what is necessary, is a look at the very root of the conflict in order to address it comprehensively.


Oct 2014

Guiding a discussion on population in Pakistan

By Mohid Iftikhar

Since the early days of Pakistan, social conditions have not been conducive for a healthy society. This statement could be analyzed through various view points; first, what the print and electronic media have communicated till now and secondly, expert opinions. But it is essential to recognize the perspective of Peace Journalism for population control in Pakistan, which has been a vital social concern.

Peace journalism in the matter would move beyond a stereotypical headline. Instead, a context would be communicated of a will and determination to control population. An article by Akram, “Pakistan poverty dozen” quotes: “Three wars with India; a never-ending arms race, and involvement in America’s wars in Afghanistan, has drained Pakistan’s limited resources and attention away from economic and social development.”

Through the above statement, a struggle of Pakistan’s leadership can be identified. Perhaps, this is one aspect of peace journalism that communicates the truth. A significant element of peace journalism is not being critical; rather a trend has emerged from Pakistan’s standpoint which promotes knowledge and necessary action for population control. This is disseminated through both print and electronic media. In journalistic writings references to reports and research are made for joint efforts by the government of Pakistan and International organizations on family planning and future goals.

Mehid Iftikhar is currently working on his research degree “Masters in Philosophy (Peace and Conflict studies)” from National Defence University, Pakistan. Recently, he was a visiting faculty member at a public sector university.

Peace journalism comprehends maturity involving all stakeholders in a social challenge. In Pakistan’s relevance; population control involves the citizens, government and non-gov-ernmental organizations. Their progress for working collectively towards education of important issues, like pre-mature births and early marriages is a valid aspect from a peace perspective.
Rongo Univ. center examines Kenyan media by Dr. Fredrick Ogenga

For many decades Africa has been represented negatively. The narrative about the continent has been that Africa is home to diseases, failed states, poverty and conflicts. However, the question is: Who is responsible for the invention of this narrative about Africa? Is there a way Africa can reclaim its history in the context of this dominant negative representation?

Scholars would premise their arguments on the contribution of colonialism and slavery - that colonialism contributed largely to the negative discourse and the idea of the “dark continent” as explorers and missionaries scrambled for a piece of Africa under the veil of ‘enlightening’ the natives. It is the extension of this narrative, as advanced by the local and foreign media, that would compel keen observers to have quick answers and conclusions to the reasons behind the negative representation of Africa.

Mass media through technology has simply glorified the perception that there is nothing good that can ever come out of Africa. Therefore, one quick answer to complex questions raised about the idea of Africa out of a list of possibly many would be that the mass media, both local and foreign, have been responsible for the negative images/representations about Africa. The latter has been celebrated by Western commercial media. But should

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Rongo Univ. to host Oct. Peace and Reconciliation Journalism seminar

Radio Journalists will be gathering at Rongo University in southwestern Kenya Oct. 14-16 for a Peace and Reconciliation Journalism seminar. The event is sponsored by the Center for Global Peace Journalism (Park University, Parkville, MO USA) and The Center for Media and Democracy, Peace and Security (Rongo University, Kenya).

Steven Youngblood (Center for Global Peace Journalism) will be lead instructor. He will be assisted by Dr. Fredrick Ogenga (Rongo Univ.) and Gloria Laker (Peace Journalism Foundation of East Africa).

The seminar will feature instruction on the basics of peace journalism, how PJ can be used as a reconciliation tool, and will include a hands-on radio reporting exercise in the field.

Rongo Univ. center examines Kenyan media

By Dr. Fredrick Ogenga

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by its proponents but seeks to find and institutionalize new philosophical approaches to peace journalism research in Africa inspired by Africanism that are more hybrid (Hybrid Peace Journalism or HPJ). This was recently unpacked in a recent study by Ogenga (2012) published by the Conflict and Communication Online where the opportunity for its experimentation was missed by the Kenyan Press when covering Operation Linda Nchi or Protect the Nation.

Our research agenda is to deconstruct ideologies of journalism in conflict reporting and PJ to come up with HPJ that consider local wisdom, contexts and nuances to transform journalism from within mainstream media institutions in Kenya, East Africa and Africa through newly developed curricula in media, conflict and peace in educational institutions of higher learning. African journalism has been trapped between Western traditional, commercial-cultural-industries of mediation and knowledge production and Western fashioned lenses and blueprints in reporting news which have often represented the continent negatively and sensational. As it would be expected, African journalism has simply become that of mimicry and bandwagonism. Our programme is beginning to rationalise the possibilities of African journalism that is unique and different yet in sync with Western modes of expectations.

As one of the delegates in the recent 4th International Africa Peace Conference held in Johannesburg South Africa titled: “Alternative Dispute Resolution and Peace Studies in Africa: Lessons Prospects and Challenges,” jointly organized by the Centre for African Peace and Conflict Resolution (CAPCR) of California State University, Sacramento, USA and the African Centre for the Constructive Resolution of Disputes (ACCORD), we recognized the fact that mass media have formed an integral part of conflict resolution acknowledging that it can either enhance or mitigate conflict based on the approach, position or angle taken when covering conflicts in Africa. That the media in Africa seem to follow a Western trend of reporting dictated by Western ideologies of journalism which compels them to cover Africa sensationally and negatively.

There is need to deconstruct Western ideologies of journalism by infusing the currently growing concept of peace journalism in conflict reporting with local approaches to news coverage to come up with hybrid ways (HPJ) of representing Africa that take into consideration the nuances in the continent.

For this to be achievable, institutions of higher learning are encouraged to introduce curriculum in media, peace and security studies to train African journalists to master these newly formulated hybrid traditions that are necessary for transforming media institutions in Africa from within.

Discussing peace media in Rongo, Kenya.

from Pg 7

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Peace Reporter’s Showcase: Libyan Flashbacks

By Michael Gleich

Libya is never-ending horror film. But this film has only one spectator. He cannot believe what he is seeing. Feras, 26, has studied law and wants to become a successful car salesman. His wounded friend is on the passenger seat; he is bleeding from a bullet wound to the calf. In the back seat, the captives, guarded at gun-point by a third man, are lying on the ground. In front of a pharmacy. Dead. A bullet through the passenger seat. "It felt like a heavy weight had been lifted off my shoulders. I feel safe here," he states. "At the beginning, I found it unbelievable that the carers seemed to draw happiness out of the mere fact of me just being there. Meanwhile I know: Their happiness is real. I simply feel welcome." An atmosphere of trust is also fostered by the centre's insistence on neutrality. Adolescents from pro-Gaddafi families sit next to former freedom fighters.

Feras did not fight against foreign enemies. The revolution against dictator Muammar al-Gaddafi drew boundaries straight through families, companies and football teams. Once friendly neighbours became hated enemies, students armed themselves with grenades, regular soldiers became killers who murder civilians. Nobody trusts anyone. Many scores to be settled. And too many open wounds.

Flashbacks is the name of the trauma which Feras suffers. One experience destroys the mind's comprehensive facility. It's too much, too disturbing.

In the war two years ago, Feras did not fight against foreign enemies. The revolution against dictator Muammar al-Gaddafi drew boundaries straight through families, companies and football teams. Once friendly neighbours became hated enemies, students armed themselves with grenades, regular soldiers became killers who murder civilians. Nobody trusts anyone. Many scores to be settled. And too many open wounds.

On the outside, everything seems normal. A smart phone is passed over a mocha in a café. On it runs a clip where a captured revolution- ary’s head is severed by a solider with a knife. He slaughters him, just how goats are slaughtered. Young men in Libya have many such videos on their phones. "Show me a gruesome video, and I'll show you one which is even more gruesome."

The centre recommends these to psychiatrists a place to confidentially experience the centre for one after another. The centre is founded by the registered charity "Culture Counts Foundation" dedicated to support "Constructive Journalism".

Continued on next page
The Peace Journalist

Mozambique from Pg 12

Marianne Perez de Fransius is an educator and peace worker specialized in peace media. She is the founder of Peace Is Sexy (www.peaceissexy.net) which shifts the understanding of peace from dull, idealistic and green to peace as sexy, possible, profitable and fun.

It was an eye-opening experience to learn about the state of journalism in Mozambique. Community radio is by far the most widely accessed source of information for the general population, yet stations often operate on shoestring budgets with volunteers who often have little professional training in journalism, making them vulnerable to manipulation and propaganda. Additionally, radio stations have little capital available to replace or update equipment, further adding to their challenges.

The journalists in Beira shared so many unbelievable stories of political intimidation that I told them that they should start doing satirical journalism. (Jon Stewart couldn’t even come up with some of this stuff!) One journalist related how last year, during the local elections campaign, he went out to cover a candidate and when he came home members of the other party had plastered his house with their candidate’s propaganda lest he forget him. Another journalist told me the story of a schoolteacher who volunteered at the community radio. He was perceived to give more favorable coverage to the party that lost the election. As a result, the new district administrator transferred him from his teaching post to working in funeral services despite the fact that there is already a severe shortage of teachers. After that, he didn’t dare volunteer at the community radio station again.

On the other hand, the group in Quelimane took their civic duties very seriously and displayed journalism as a means of improving their communities. In one district, villagers were able to obtain an ambulance because journalists covered the plight of the ill and suffering there. The Catholic radio station has as one of its crusades a generous trash collection which, given the general cleanliness of the city, seems to be working. Others were giving a voice to the voiceless.

In Mozambique, political power opens so many doors, especially economic ones, that individuals and parties are motivated to access or consolidate power for financial reasons rather than for ideological reasons.

In a scandal that broke earlier this year, the Green Party was caught abusing its privilege to import goods into the country duty-free by importing SUVs at a profit. This puts journalists in a delicate position as there is little for them to discuss in terms of party platforms and ideology. The political parties are very well organized and party loyalty is a strong currency in Mozambique. Journalists who attempt to be fair and balanced in their reporting are often considered disloyal by the party they “should” belong to. Due to their neighborhood or their tribal group. Perceived disloyalty can have important ramifications, effectively making it difficult to obtain jobs, basic services, or official documents.

The Peace Journalism trainings unsurprisingly found many enthusiasts in Quelimane, but also, interestingly, amongst journalists working for the official state newspaper which tends to be a government mouthpiece. On the other hand, journalists in Nampula found the concepts challenging as one reporter admitted, “I’m having trouble wrapping my mind around this. We’re so used to reporting in an us vs. them frame that it’s hard to get out of it.” Nonetheless, Mozambican journalists universally acknowledged that neither they nor the general population want to return to war and grasped the potential that journalism has both for inciting violence and for incentivizing peace.


Peace Journalist – Africa Group – There is now a Peace Journalism – Africa group that can be publicly accessed on Facebook (https://www.facebook.com/groups/1480984315511416/).

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Guinea-Bissau journalists travel to Rhode Island
by Gita Brown

In Guinea-Bissau, a former colony of Portugal, radio is the primary means of communication. Political and social news, and even deaths, are announced via radio. The problem, said Rhode Island College (RIC) Professor of History and African Studies Peter Mendy, is that many radio broadcast journalists are “bought” by politicians and are openly in favor of one politician over another. Biased reporting in Guinea-Bissau and in other parts of Africa often leads to violence. Best practices in reporting will be the focus of study for five radio broadcast journalists from Guinea-Bissau who are enrolled in a new certificate program in peace journalism at RIC. Preparation for their course work at RIC began with an intensive two-week orientation to campus life and to America last summer.

The team of reporters who hail from Rádio Sol Mansi (Radio Sunrise) consists of Amadu Uri Djaló, editor-and-chief, who oversees 40 national correspondents and 30 journalists; Anabela Bull Ramalho, program director; Casimiro Cajucan, journalist and former Washington correspondent for Portuguese Public Television RTP; and Armando Mussá Sani, trainer in the Portuguese language.

The Pro Dignitate Foundation for Human Rights in Lisbon, Portugal, initiated the training of these reporters and went on to promote peace in Portuguese-speaking Africa, with specific focus on Guinea-Bissau and in other parts of Africa. "Taking their reality as a first step, we’ve been working on standards and formats that could help them improve their present biased political reporting, which leads to violence both during and after elections." According to Mendy, a member of the Academic Advisory Council for the Institute and Pro Dignitate signed an accord in 2010, agreeing to contribute to the creation of situations where peace can be promoted. At the same time the ways different media are used to contribute to the different forms of media are used to contribute to the creation of environments where violence can be incited and how media can be used to build peace.

"Peace journalism is an effort to establish and maintain peace through ethical reporting," Mendy explained. Their orientation at RIC included a week-long professional development workshop led by Pedro Bicudo, international journalist and former Washington correspondent for Portuguese Public Television RTP. "Taking their reality as a first step, we’ve been working on standards and formats that could help them improve their work at Rádio Sol Mansi," Bicudo said.

The institute and Pro Dignitate focuses on the role of religion and media in promoting peace, while the majority Huts and the minority Tutsis. With the prompting of state-controlled and independent Rwandan media Hutus attacked the Tutsis. Almost 800,000 people lost their lives.

These three chapters speak of three things. First of all, every possible means of media was used to encourage the people to fear, to be proud, and to fight. Both words and images could be used to highlight the suffering, commemorate the killing or to celebrate martyrdom. Local heroes are glorified and enemies are vilified. The second part of the book deals with promoting peace by being a witness, searching for truth and reconciliation. The concluding chapter, titled from Pg 14

The Institute and Pro Dignitate signed an accord in 2010, agreeing to work together to promote peace in Portuguese-speaking Africa, with specific focus on radio broadcasting. According to Mendy, a member of the Academic Advisory Council for the Institute, peace journalism is critical for Guinea-Bissau and for Africa in general. Although the country has been independent for 41 years, its independence has been a tumultuous one, with numerous coups d’etat, presidential and political assassinations and military influence on the government. Radio journalists often present biased political reporting, which leads to violence both during and after elections. Though the five visiting journalists will explore best practices in broadcast journalism, the certificate program they are enrolled in is called peace journalism.

Continued on next page
Sahar Speaks seeks to train Afghan women

By Amie Ferris-Rotman

Proposal: Sahar Speaks!

A fellowship report for an Afghan female correspondent

As the last U.S. troops prepare to withdraw by the end of 2016, Afghanistan hopes to undergo its first transition of democracy in almost a century. The need to advance the careers of Afghan female journalists is critical.

An accurate story cannot be told without the participation of its women. Foreign news outlets hire Afghan men, but not female reporters. This means the world misses out on the full Afghan story.

Afghanistan has thirty million people, and 9,000 local journalists. This is a high number. It is the same press saturation as the United States.

But deteriorating security as foreign troops prepare to leave, combined with internal political strife, mean that the number of female journalists in the country is shrinking.

It takes effort to recruit, train, and encourage Afghan female journalists. It requires intentional investment.

This is why, as a Stanford Journalism Fellow over the last year, I developed Sahar Speaks, a training, mentoring, and publishing program for Afghan female journalists. I have teamed up with the International Women’s Media Foundation (IMMF) in Washington, D.C., and we are actively looking for funding.

The vision behind this project can be seen in its name. “Sahar” is a common female name in Afghanistan, meaning “dawn.” Its meaning here is two-fold: it represents all Afghan women, and also heralds the beginning of a new era, where Afghan female reporters can tell their stories to the world.

Afghanistan has approximately 2,000 local female journalists, representing around a fifth of the country’s total. For a place like Afghanistan, still ranked one of the world’s worst places to be a woman, this is considerable.

But there are no Afghan female reporters at the foreign news outlets in Kabul — not at the BBC, The New York Times, Reuters, Associated Press, etc. This has been a systemic failure by the international press.

The Afghan TV channel that I work for right now is only interested in the hard news about the struggle and violence, so often I just report on what is happening at the moment without analyzing or explaining the background,” Laila Odeh says.

Odeh is a Palestinian freelance journalist and correspondent, working for the television news channel France24 and Monte Carlo Radio in Jerusalem.

She was born in Jerusalem and has worked as a journalist in Israel and Palestine for different international media outlets since 1993. She knows the conflict very well, and would prefer to do more analyzing and explain the structure in which the events occur. However, most of her editors only want her to report exactly what the official leaders say.

Odeh says it’s frustrating, since the women often know when the leaders mean something other than what they are saying. To make up for this, she says it’s important to go out and ask civilians in the street for their opinions, too.

“They are the ones who are affected by the decisions made by the leaders. If you want to know what the consequences of the politics are, you have to talk to the people living in the reality,” she says.

Odeh adds that it is equally important to speak to both men and women. Without female news subjects the picture presented will never be complete. “Sometimes women and girls are shy and don’t want to be on TV, but I always try to persuade them to give their opinion. It is really important that their views are reported too,” Odeh says.

In most Arabic media women are pretty much invisible in the commenting field – especially as experts. “It is a big problem,” Odeh says. “I don’t know why, every time I ask a male colleague why they don’t invite female experts, they don’t even reply. It is as if they don’t think women can do it, and they don’t want this to change. But I think that if one TV channel would change, the rest would follow.”

“Like in the rest of the world there is no lack of female experts. The Palestinians are very educated people, and the universities are full of women. You just have to look beyond the old conventions,” she observes.

Do Odeh cover peace initiatives for her current employer?

“Yes, but only if the official leaders are negotiating. And to be honest we hardly cover that anymore either, since it never leads anywhere. We don’t cover small peace groups since my editors are more interested in the big news than what is going on in everyday life,” she said.


Kvinna till Kvinna literally means “Woman to Woman”. Kvinna till Kvinna cooperates with women’s organizations working for women’s rights and peace. See: http://kvinnatillkvinnan.se/en/

Thirteen years of the NATO-led war in Afghanistan, doesn’t the international press owe the global community the full story? 

Review

By Burhan Farah Hassan

Oct 2014

Review from Pg 15

‘Swords into ploughshares,’ shows how weapons of destruction can be transferred into productive tools of peace. This concluding chapter, named with a phrase from the book of Isaiah in the Bible, highlights how the weapons of destruction can be transformed into productive tools of peace. The author writes that it is the duty of each individual, community, ethnic group, religion, government, and media outlet to facilitate peace building.

Media can be used to play a vital role in conflict transformation and peace building. Peace building has different stages and creative media can be used to contribute to each of these stages. First of all, media can be used to bear witness. Secondly, media can conduct inquiry that leads towards truth. Thirdly, media can portray means of reconciliation thereby reducing the intensity of violence and finally media can help people to envisage a peaceful future. I strongly feel that the author succeeded in keeping a balance with regard to the role of religion and media in promoting peace and inciting violence in ethnic conflict transformation.

Media can be used to play a vital role in conflict transformation and peace building. Peace building has different stages and creative media can be used to contribute to each of these stages. First of all, media can be used to bear witness. Secondly, media can conduct inquiry that leads towards truth. Thirdly, media can portray means of reconciliation thereby reducing the intensity of violence and finally media can help people to envisage a peaceful future. I strongly feel that the author succeeded in keeping a balance with regard to the role of religion and media in promoting peace and inciting violence in ethnic conflict transformation.


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security training designed to mitigate physical risk and protect digital content. As a result of their training, fellows will explore new narratives, seeking sources from all strata of society, and through accurate, ethical and gendered reporting they will tell the story of women in the quickly evolving environment in Afghanistan.

Afghanistan

Odeh's female colleagues represent all Afghan women, and her work is changing the perspectives of society.

It would be more productive for English-language media that produce numerous stories on women's rights to hire Afghan female reporters.

We propose a three-year reporting fellowship for Afghan female correspondents, with 15 participants each year. Beginning in Kabul, training will provide the fellows with advanced reporting skills and mentorship, enabling them to produce innovative, in-depth coverage of complex issues.

In addition, the IWMI will provide women's rights to hire Afghan female reporters.
Operation ‘War Journalism’ rages in Gaza

By Erin Niemela

As Israel’s boots hit the ground in Gaza last summer, Operation War Journalism raged on. Both Arab and Israeli war journalists weaponized rhetoric: False dichotomies (do we bomb or do nothing?), and a pro-violence worldview, among other deadly bullets. War journalism sells violent conflict - “if it bleeds, it leads” - and we bought it. The violence in Gaza is partially a result of decades of media-distributed war products made from state-provided materials. War journalists escalate and prolong violent conflict. Their reporting choices, whether conscious or not, are harmful to citizens on all sides of violent conflicts.

Fortunately, violence isn’t the only product on the market. “To say that violence is the only thing that sells is to insult humanity,” Prof. Johan Galtung said his 2000 essay, “The Task of Peace Journalism.” Peace journalism, Galtung’s conception of the 70s, is defined as “when editors and reporters make choices about what to report, and how to report it - that create opportunities for society at large to consider and to value nonviolent responses to conflict.” Peace journalism insulates journalists from war propaganda by avoiding false dichotomies, highlighting nonviolent options and making other positive peace reporting choices. For the cynics: Peace does, in fact, sell. Conflict & Communication Online studies in 2005 and 2006 (Kempf, Sphors) showed audiences accepted peace journalism articles no less, and even more, than traditional war journalism articles. Nevertheless, war journalism continues, and Gaza is the perfect battleground.

Al-Jazeera’s regularly updated webpage lists the names and ages of 285 Palestinian victims in Gaza. In a 2013 study on Arab news framing of the 2008-2009 Gaza conflict, author Mohamad Hamas Elmasry and colleagues found that some Arab news networks regularly framed Palestinians as victims of Israeli aggression, showed images of Palestinian grief and included names and ages for Palestinian victims more than those of Israeli victims. In fairness to Al-Jazeera, two Israeli victims’ names and ages - the first two Israeli deaths (at pretime) - sit below the list. But the names aren’t meant to provide balance or personalize those deaths. They’re meant to dichotomize between good and evil and provoke the question: Whose side are you on? With victimization comes demonization - the “evil” side is implied and violence against evil is justified.

For Israeli news, it’s the same story. In an extensive 2004 study on audience effects from news of Israeli-Palestinian conflict, authors salaam and kempf showed audiences accepted peace journalism articles no less, and even more, than traditional war journalism articles. Nevertheless, war journalism continues, and Gaza is the perfect battleground.

A July 18th article from The Times of Israel on the Gaza invasion is a case in point. The title: “20 Hamas fighters killed, 13 captured in first hours of ground offensive.” With violence in the headline, the lead justifies: “IDF says soldiers in Gaza des- truyed 21 rocket launchers, find several tunnel openings; Eitan Barak, 21, from Herzliya, is first IDF fatality; 80 rockets fired at Israel.” Dangerous weapons, nefarious tunnels and an Israeli death are just the facts on the ground and they happen to provide justification.

Yet, there are other facts, such as in a curious blur near the bottom. “Gaza health officials said at least 20 Palestinians have been killed since the ground operation began, including three teenage siblings killed by shrapnel from a tank shell attack. It was not immediately clear if the 17 terrorists killed by the IDF were among the casualties reported by Gaza authorities.” Peace journalism refrains from emphasizing “our” facts while marginalizing “their” facts, and names “evils-doers” on all sides.

War journalism gives us two sides to choose from, but it only offers one option for resolving conflict: violence. As media often frame the Israeli government and its citizens, and Hamas and Palestinians, as one and the same, we get to choose the violence of either Hamas or Israel.

Media immigration coverage scrutinized in Bronx, NY

In July, Peace Journalism Seminars at BronxNet/Lehman College in New York City began with the question, “What’s wrong with the media?” The responses were animated, and didn’t deviate much from the common themes of inaccuracy and distortion. Then the question narrowed, focusing on specific coverage of immigrants. Again, the participants easily listed a dozen tired stereotypes of immigrants perpetuated by the media.

These immigrant stereotypes, and the media narratives that fuel them, were the theme of the workshops at BronxNet sponsored by the Center for Global Peace Journalism. One two-day workshop was for students and young reporters, while two other shorter workshops were for public access TV producers and the general public.

Participants discussed using a peace journalism model as a way for media to break out of these stale, distorted narratives about immigrants. Then, workshopers collected man on the street interviews about the benefits that immigrants bring to communities like the Bronx.

The students and access producers alike learned to think about media, and particularly media coverage of immigrants, in a more analytical, critical manner.

Gaza

But violence is never the only choice for dealing with conflict. Peace journalists report nonviolent options from Palestinians, Israelis and any other stakeholders. Not because we don’t recognize claims to victimhood, but because we recognize that emphasizing violence as the only conflict management option only produces more violence.

Reporting nonviolent options means sourcing peacebuilders, like the Christian Peacemaker Teams that work with locals to build nonviolent, Palestinian-led, grassroots resistance. gush salom, where Jewish-Israels use direct action to stop the occupation. Insight on Conflict and Peace NGO Forum host a long list of peacebuilding organizations in Israel and the Occupied Palestinian Territories. Any respectable reporter can find a peacebuilder to quote, and a balanced, impartial report on Gaza depends on including the voices of peace.

Traditional war journalists support perpetual violence - their bread and butter. Yet, reporters could choose to support perpetual peace and still maintain journalistic integrity. Peace journalism practices deflect war propaganda, provide accurate and complete information to an audience. We need more peace journalists in Gaza, America, Israel and every country suffering through violent conflict. This isn’t advocacy, public relations or advertising - these are the goals of war profiteers. This is simply good journalism by good journalists with a commitment to democracy, accountability, and the well being of global society.
IPRA attendees ‘Unite for Peace’ in Istanbul

By Dr. Metin Erosy

Emphasizing that journalists act ridiculously, especially in times of conflict and war, peace researcher Prof. Johan Galtung said that there are journalists who do not or cannot ask the politicians the question, “What will be the solution to this problem?”

Academics, researchers and artists committed to world peace met in Istanbul at the 25th conference of the International Peace Research Association (IPRA), which was organized under the theme “Uniting for Peace: Building Sustainable Peace through Universal Values.” Over 500 people from 95 different countries attended the conference, which lasted from 11-15 August 2014. As a group of academics from the Faculty of Communication and Media Studies of the Eastern Mediterranean University, we had the opportunity to attend the conference.

He shares his knowledge
Prof. Dr. Johan Galtung, a pioneer academic in the field of peace research in the world, was among the keynote speakers of the conference. We had the chance to meet Professor Galtung and have a chat with him before he gave his opening speech. Norwegian peace researcher Galtung, who was born in 1930, travels around the world to share his knowledge despite his advanced age. In addition, he radiates positive sentiments with his energetic attitude and witty speech. We approached him and told him that we came from Cyprus, and we learned from him that he visited the island in the most remarkable and difficult times of its history.

“I became a model”
He said that he visited the island in 1964 and 1974 to give lectures and make connections. In our short conversation, when we asked him to take a photograph, he told us an anecdote of Albert Einstein. Einstein, who left his hallmark in the world of science, is often surrounded by people who wish to take a photograph with him. In one of those occasions he says, “I am no longer an academician, but a model.” Galtung, after sharing this anecdote with us, stood between us and posed like a “model”, smiling at the camera with his usual loving and peaceful facial expression.

The living legend of peace journalism
Johan Galtung is known to be the person who put forward the concept of peace journalism. He is a reputable academician not only in the field of peace journalism, but also in the field of peace research in general. As someone who works in the field of peace journalism, it was a nice feeling to encounter with the inventor and the living legend of the concept.

In his opening speech, Galtung stressed that peace research started in Norway in 1959. He said that the United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization (UNESCO) also became interested in peace research in those years. Referring to the barriers peace research faced in its early years, Galtung said that the most serious obstacles were erected by other disciplines (psychology, politics and international relations, sociology, etc.), and that in those days, it was believed that a separate field of “peace research” was not needed. Galtung and his colleagues did not step back and were able to move peace research to the point we know today.

IPRA established in 1964
International Peace Research Association (IPRA) was founded in 1964 by a group of scientists including Johan Galtung. This non-governmental organization, which celebrates its 50th anniversary today, continues its work in spite of those who do not believe in peace. Asst. Prof. Dr. Nusret Kenar from Sakarya University and Dr. Ibrahim Seaga Shaw from Northumbria University, currently hold the IPRA secretary general positions.

We need to discuss the solution
In his speech, Johan Galtung also mentioned the importance of democracy to world peace, and defined democracy as an instrument to manage the world. Stressing that journalists act ridiculously, especially in times of conflict and war, Galtung said that there are journalist who do not or cannot ask the politicians the crucial question of “what will be the solution to this problem?”

Galtung suggested that it is necessary to seek paths to achieve solutions and to develop a “this is OURS” attitude.

We must take an active role
Finally, if the subject is to be connected to the Cyprus Problem, we can say that the current situation in the island stems from the fact that we cannot meet on a common ground with a sense of “we”. As Galtung also noted, it is necessary that journalists and other individuals pressure the people who are responsible for developing solutions to the problems. Therefore, journalists should leave the logic of passive protocol reporting behind, and write their news stories from a more critical questioning, and analytical perspective. The concept of peace journalism that Galtung has put forward contributes to the journalistic values. As individuals working in the media, we must review our understanding of journalism and be equipped to ask the necessary questions.

Center for Global Peace Journalism
at Park University, Parkville, Missouri USA

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.

TURKEY PROJECT: The Center for Global Peace Journalism at Park University has received a $35,000 grant from the U.S. State Department and the U.S. Embassy in Ankara, Turkey. The grant will fund a project titled, “Reporting Syrian Refugees: Building Communities of Understanding in Turkey.” The next edition of The Peace Journalist will have full details.

October 2014

Continued on next page
Journalists gather, train for peace in DR Congo

By De Gerseric Fresnel Tsimba Bongol

The Group of Journalists for Peace (GJP) in the Democratic Republic of Congo was created in April 2008 by Nathalie Christine Foundou, a journalist at Tele-Congo. The group’s mission is to contribute to the promotion of a culture of peace through education, promoting actions of non-violence, rights and duties of citizens, promoting international humanitarian law, and encourage freedom of the press.

The GJP brings together journalists from diverse backgrounds who reflect on approaches to prevention, analysis, and transformation of conflicts. GJP also promotes democratic debate in order to become peace-makers.

It is in this context that we find the various activities it organizes. One training session at the beginning of the year had the theme of the importance of journalism in promoting the culture of citizenship and peace. This session was organized with the support of the United States Embassy in Congo. Jennifer Golden, vice consul of the US Mission in Congo said, “A country cannot develop without peace. Peace promotes building infrastructure, constant social development because only peace can attract national and international investment, the unity of peoples, and many other things that make a better life.”

Golden also praised the actions of the GJP. “I congratulate the Group of Journalists for Peace that received funding for democracy and human rights in 2012. This allowed them to implement the projects. We support this organization in the promotion of democratic values, civic participation, and conflict resolution. Thus, we also welcome the opportunity to popularize peace among journalists.”

Nathalie Christine Foundou, President of GJP said, “Our mission is to inform, train and educate. Thus, information is the only weapon against ignorance. However, this weapon requires an apprenticeship, a renewal of knowledge and capacity building.”

Just recently on the occasion of the International Day of the African Woman celebrated on July 31, the GJP organized a conference debate on the theme “Women’s Experience in the media and in politics in the Republic of Congo. Attending the event was Mrs. Strother Murray, iCharge D’Affairs at the United States Embassy in Congo. Other attendees included journalists, politicians, and students in journalism.

In her opening remarks, Ms. Strother Murray placed particular emphasis on two concepts highlighted by President Barack Obama—responsibility and education. These are two concepts that summarize the struggle for the emancipation of women.

“If we are here it’s because we are empowered and we believe it is possible that all women are emancipated. We have confidence in us and we believe that women can perform the same duties as men at all levels,” Strother Murray said.

Six other women present shared their experiences, including Opimba Charlotte, member of the Congolese National Assembly, who said, “Political life is not easy but we must be courageous (…). The National Assembly has 139 members including thirteen women. That is absolutely nothing when we need to reach 30%.”

The president of GJP said that this “Women’s Experience” event was an opportunity to rebel against the retrograde traditions that kept captive African women, and to speak out against violence and childbirth traumas that hold women back in DRC and elsewhere.

Ashoka engages journalists for change

Despite the challenges, journalists can be agents of change. This important and encouraging message was the most critical take-away from the symposium, “Journalism for Change,” held in August in Mexico City. Sponsored by the NGO Ashoka, the symposium gathered 80 influential Mexican and Latin American journalists as well as other interested parties like the International Center for Journalists (ICFJ), Poynter Institute, and the Center for Global Peace Journalism at Park University. Attendees learned that the practice of change journalism, and peace journalism, faces many obstacles in Mexico. Javier Garza, a newspaper editor and representative of ICFJ, told a symposium roundtable about the obstacles to responsible journalism posed by both economics and violence. “People are afraid of the consequences of reporting about drug killings. One related, and chilling, scenario was discussed: Can murders become so common that they cease to qualify as news? The symposium concluded on an optimistic note, as several break-out group participants pledged to unite to disseminate change-oriented stories and to continue to exchange ideas about how to leverage media for positive change.” – Steven Youngblood, Center for Global Peace Journalism

Serapaz

by Lourdes Zamanillo

“Peace conflicts are like a see-saw with a very fat kid on one side and a very skinny one on the other. As mediators, we must put more weight on the skinny kid’s side, put the fat kid on a diet or move the axis of the see-saw.” – Pablo Romo, founder of SERAPAZ and Ashoka fellow.

Throughout the years, journalism has fought for the public interest by detecting and exposing crime, protecting public safety and always seeking more and more intricate, it has set up obstacles for diversity ining more and more intricate, it has set up obstacles for diversity in...

By Lourdes Zamanillo

lourdzes Zamanillo is the communications coordinator for Ashoka Mexico and Centre America. Previously, she has collaborated with media such as Forbes, Nextbillion and National Geographic.

SERAPAZ' success has been possible largely due to its staff. Coming from different backgrounds that involve the civil society, the academy and the church, the team is able to build integral solutions and communicate better with actors involved in diverse issues. Since conflicts usually derive from bad communication and misunderstandings, empathy and the capacity to understand different perspectives, possibilities, and even contradictions are the keys to prevent violent inci...
Somali journalists strive to build peace

By Mekuria Mekasha

A workshop organized for Somali journalists was conducted by the Intergovernmental Authority on Development (IGAD) in collaboration with the Federal Government of Somalia, the Ministry of Information, and the Ethiopian Communication Affairs Office. The four-day workshop, supported financially by the European Union, was held April 7-11 in Addis Ababa, Ethiopia.

The training was taught by Mekuria Mekasha of the School of Journalism and Communication at Addis Ababa University, and organized by the Ethiopian Leadership Institute.

Some of the main areas covered in the session were peace-building through media, understanding conflicts and violence, peace journalism, the power of media in conflict resolution, the responsibility of peace journalism and new media for peace and social change. The session was presented in the context of the situation in Somalia. To make the training more practical and hands-on, the documentary video from Al Jazeera presented and commented by the Somali journalist.

According to the participants, they are striving to bring peace in Somalia. Hana Mohamud said, “The Somali women are glue in bringing different ethnic groups in Somalia to discuss peace and future development of Somalia. We journalists will work in attaining this goal.”

Mohamed Odu said that, “We have to change our approach of reporting by avoiding and defining the conflict by always quoting the Somali war lords who make familiar demands. We are keen now to go beyond the elites. Report the words of ordinary people who may voice the opinions shared by many.”

The training also focused on the issue of diversity in the Somali newsroom to make the peace journalism more vibrant and dynamic. The participants strongly suggested during their discussion about the need to have female journalists working in the media. “We have very few female reporters. We do not report issues of importance to women. Our reporting does not represent the reality of our country,” said Mohamud.

IGAD believes the training was important for supporting the Somali stabilization process and ongoing AMISOM military operations by enhancing the capacity of Somali media to deepen peace-building and stabilization processes.

If media refuse to shed light on the interests of the people, the people can only seek other means for getting the desired attention – means that usually resort to violent conflict.

“In Mexico, people are throwing bombs and blocking streets to be heard. There is no communication between the government and its citizens. Institutions are corrupted and one-sided. Enterprises are recognized. Politicians are recognized. But common people are made invisible and have no chance in the public agenda. This is what power does, it makes its opponents invisible,” explains Pablo Romo.

If there is no communication, the only way of solving a conflict is through force. Force creates martyrs. Martyrs create rage. Rage creates more violence. Journalists (like those who attended Ashoka’s August symposium—see pg. 22) and organizations like SERAPAZ hold the power to articulate a dialogue between social actors, to make visible the invisible, to give a voice to the voiceless, and thus, to create change.