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IJJ Alumni Review 2009/2010

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Is it not a question that jumps up every once in a while in a journalist's life: Why did I become a journalist? In fact, it marked the beginning of my career when I was asked about this "why" during the entry exam for journalism school. And my instant reply was that I would love to sit with my typewriter under an apple tree after travelling around the globe to unscramble the mosaic of life. It was all about romanticism.

Much of it has gone as I have learned about the risks journalists have to take in order to report on taboo subjects such as corruption and human rights violations, accepting their responsibility. If you asked me today, I would certainly answer journalism is about tearing down walls. What would be your answer? Would it be the same today as it was yesterday? Why tearing down walls? Have a look at the photo above. It is a cut-out of a line of 1,000 giant dominoes that were knocked over along a two kilometre strip near the Brandenburg Gate in celebration of the 20th anniversary of the fall of the Berlin Wall. I – to add another piece of my life mosaic – was born behind the iron curtain and it was definitely the greatest party of my life when the border opened. But we all had to discover that there are still many walls around that divide or imprison and not all of them are made of bricks. It is among others the article about Philippine journalism in this edition that tells us about the pressure the media can develop when denied access to information. The same article, however, also describes the Maguindanao massacre in which 30 reporters were killed, and it asks when a story is worth the risk. But even if such news leaves us lost for words, journalists should not surrender. Who else could bring light into the darkness?

The articles in our review are mostly written by our alumni. They give insights into the IJJ training and dialogue programme to promote a free and independent press as well as into the agenda of media houses in our partner countries. After all you will find various answers to the question about the "Why" – and we all might again enter the talk about what has happened to our dreams and expectations.

David Towl

inwent

Capacity Building International
Germany

Multimedia Journalism

The **transition** from print to online journalism is in full progress. Media houses are transforming their news operations and reviewing all aspects from business models to story-telling formats. The merging of online-print newsrooms, the **new methods of multimedia reporting** as well as the new possibilities for mobile reporting challenge journalists' professional skills and editorial management. **Capacity Building** is essential for **good-quality journalism** in the digital age. It is even more important in societies in transition to democracy. Multimedia and online journalism has the potential to increase transparency and **political participation** of the civil society, and thus to foster economic and social development worldwide. However, with the expansion of the internet there has also been an increase in attempts to **control, filter, monitor and censor** online communication. In addition, the rapid pace of 24/7 online reporting raises the risk that research, accuracy and thoroughness may be neglected. The training programme of the IIJ aims at strengthening the **professional** and **ethical** competences of multimedia journalists. In addition to its two-month basic course and various advanced modules, the IIJ introduced in 2009 a training course on “**Online media management**” which strives for enhancing the efficiency and professionalism and thereby the financial viability of online editions by introducing senior editors and media managers to management techniques that are essential for setting up a **multimedia newsroom**.

Back to classroom in Berlin

Meha Mathur, CL Media, India

About 17 years ago, appearing for the final MA exam, I resolved never to enter a classroom again, and never to appear for an exam again. The mugging up process for examinations had sapped my energy so much that I had lost all interest I had had in the relevant subject. That resolve has finally been broken, and in March 2009 I was sitting in a classroom in Berlin, sharing space with people 15 years younger than me. I was pursuing a short-term scholarship in online and digital media at the International Institute for Journalism (IIJ) of InWEnt, Berlin. The two-month course was designed to equip me with skills of online media tools like twittering, blogging, website designing as well as basic Photoshop skills, video and film-making. The course included the preparation of a website for the international media conference “Election times: harnessing the power of digital media,” organised by the IIJ in cooperation with one of Germany’s leading quality dailies, Frankfurter Allgemeine Zeitung. A one-week study tour to Hamburg, Essen and Köln was also included. It gave us the chance to observe and talk to media persons in newsrooms of prominent media organisations.

Humour makes all the difference in the world

The questioning spirit of my peers made the class very interesting. The journalist students in the class charged the faculty Peter Berger and Claus Hesselning with a flurry of questions. Peter and Claus, themselves journalists from reputed media organisations, demonstrated utmost patience in understanding and answering the questions. They made the classroom interaction most unforgettable. One thing I learned was how humour makes all the difference in the world. Peter Berger, 49, did not mind making himself the laughing stock of the class with his funny gestures and movements. Claus Hesselning demonstrated his sense of humour through his one-liners in clip tone.

Of course, the onus of learning was on the students. The assignments were in the nature of group work. We were asked to research and analyse the given topic, and often we were wracking our brains just to do so. I remember the first week when I first heard the word ‘twittering’. I was to find out the advantages of twittering for media persons and readers. To my amazement, the group did come out with sound points. The fun-

niest game was the role play of internet system. I was the server, holding a wire, showing connection, receiving requests and sending back the demanded material in small packets back to my clients. Within minutes, the network grew, with more servers, routers, DNS, IPS providers and clients. Suddenly, we found the floor was a huge mesh of wires, with messages hanging from wires, unable to move forward, and we understood why, in case of heavy traffic, the internet slows down or even breaks down.

Intercultural learning is a tight ropewalk

A good learning was also coming from peers. Working with people of ten nationalities, cultures and language backgrounds (three countries had two representatives each), and each with a different work ethos is a tight ropewalk. Each day one has to manoeuvre, so as to not to hurt sentiments, and yet to get one’s point across. As an Indian, it was new to me that most individuals, even from Africa and Asia, are more independent than we Indians are, and they can find their way in an unknown city, thanks to their map-reading skills. And it surprised me that youngsters in my group were very well aware of training opportunities across the world, and kept exploring these. Using the new-age media and information tools, they make the best of the world. So can we.



The multimedia journalism course is all about twittering, blogging, website designing and, of course, digital video. But interviewing and basic journalistic skills are still as essential as they used to be in the old media world.

About being first, best, and #1: newsroom management in the digital era

Peter Berger, IJ trainer, Hamburg



IJ course participants visit the online edition of one of Germany's leading weeklies "Die Zeit" to discuss the latest developments in online media.

Journalist Roseleen Mumbua Nzioka from The Standard Group in Nairobi was the fastest: four days after she had returned home from Germany to Kenya, her company's website appeared on number 1 position in the Google search results. Ms Nzioka did this wonderful job after attending a course that has been newly established by the International Institute for Journalism (IJ) in Berlin. Its name: Online Media Management. Astrid Kohl, director of the IJ, explains: "In developing countries online media are expanding day by day. Especially the mobile solutions. We felt a strong interest of our media partners to gain knowledge in establishing and managing online services." Thus, in summer 2009 the IJ set up a two-week course in online media management. It was taught for the first time in October by two multimedia trainers: Alan Robles from the Philippines and myself. The programme was designed for journalists from Asia and Africa who are or will be responsible for online publications.

Key question: how to make money with online journalism?

The seminar covered all items that online editors should know to run successful websites. For example, how to build up an online

newspaper edition, how to integrate the web department into the overall strategy of the company and how to make money with the online edition. Other lessons covered the production of content, workflow, social media issues and search engine optimisation.

IJ head Mrs Kohl: "The evaluation of the programme by the participants showed us that there is a strong demand for courses like this." Therefore, she decided to go even one step further: parts of this new programme were integrated into another well-known IJ course, into the one about newspaper management.

A seminar on how to combine online and print journalism

The integrated newspaper management course addressed print managers and editors-in-chief who are interested in the latest developments in print and online journalism. This seminar was held by Tatiana Repkova (France) from the World Association of Newspapers and myself. Unlike the online media course, this programme focused more on the combination of online and print journalism. How do print articles have to be changed for the website? What are the differences between reading a text online or on paper? These were only a few of the questions that were answered in the seminar. Three visits to leading German media companies gave the participants the chance to discuss the newly learned items with experienced journalists and managers. The integrated newsroom management seminar turned out to be as big a success as the online media management training. Masood Ahmed Malik, editor-in-chief of Daily Islamabad, caught the spirit: "To combine print and online is the task which journalists and managers have to manage in the future. The IJ course prepared us well for these challenges."

The digital media's impact on political transparency

IJ editors

The media have always played a crucial role for politics and democracies as such. While elections do not equal democracy, they are a necessary precondition for democratic functioning. As digital media become more and more important in developed countries as well as developing countries and those in transition, their impact on societies and their institutions is rising. To learn more about these global phenomena the IJ in cooperation with the Frankfurter Allgemeine Zeitung hosted the international media conference “Election times: harnessing the power of new media” in March 2009 in Berlin.

At the centre of the digital revolution, the internet spurs the empowerment of the individual. It has the ability to deliver breaking news as television or radio do, but with the kind of detail that is found in print. The reach of the world wide web and thus access to the international knowledge society are further extended by mobile phones used both as a reporting device and an information tool. This is of particular relevance in developing countries where growth trends for mobile phones have exceeded all expectations. For this reason, more and more online media players offer mobile editions which avoid the constraints of desktop web access in less developed regions. It was Harry Dugmore from Rhodes University in South Africa who told the conference's audience that digital media are not only boosting democracy and transparency in Africa – which he demonstrated with examples from the last elections in Ghana as well as in Zimbabwe. Digital media, said Harry Dugmore, are much more. The technology is a “public space expander,” meaning that it is shifting politics from being identity-based to being issue-based. According to Harry Dugmore, as democracies mature, “people are likely to vote for issues,” and digital media offer the public space where ideas and issues can be theorised and discussed.

Obama did not conduct a grassroots campaign

But mobile devices and the web are not just tools for the media. Politicians use them in the battle for the electorate – and there is much need to rethink every assumption about how to run a campaign, how to reach different segments of voters, how to raise money, and how to interact with the public. The US-American Nancy Scola who is associated editor at techpresident.com gave

insights into the Obama campaign. Most of all she made away with the prejudice that the Obama campaign was a so-called grassroots campaign. Instead, she told the audience, Obama's strategists did something completely new: they equipped volunteers to act according to their directions, coming directly from the headquarters in Chicago. While it is true that the Obama campaign – like all social networks – was democratising, it also was, as Nancy Scola said, a very controlled space.

Digital media are a powerful tool for voters

Nevertheless, the panellists in the discussion agreed on the fact that the internet is not only a tool for the media and politicians but also for the voters. The rise of citizen journalism, the influence of the blogosphere on shaping public opinion, the growing importance of podcasting and video as well as the increasing popularity of online social networking sites cannot be ignored by politicians neither in the developed nor in the developing world. What really is important for journalists is that they and the media they work for must identify strategies on how to deal with this emerging micro-publishing movement which on the one hand makes the media more democratic and ensures a broad plurality and diversity of views, but on the other hand makes it even more difficult for media consumers to filter all the information and to comprehend it in its full extend.

Environmental Journalism

Journalists and the media play a **decisive role** in creating awareness for **threats to the environment** and their effects on the material conditions of life. They can help change people's attitudes and thus **counteract the misuse** of our **natural resources**. Journalists can, however, only fulfil this role if they are familiar with the problems and if they are able to present them to their audience in an understandable and appealing way. In 2009, the IJ conducted a **two-month training course** on **“Environmental reporting”** which was held in Berlin from June 26 to August 21. The participants were not only **introduced** to the most common and urgent environmental issues. They were also enabled to assess and appreciate **environmental policy decisions** as well as to research all the relevant facts to report on environmental issues. Following this course, the IJ offered an e-learning programme in preparation for covering the 2009 **UN Climate Change Conference** in Copenhagen. Twelve IJ alumni joined by a coach attended the most important international conference of the year **2009** to report for their **home media outlets**.

Kenya will soon be sitting on e-waste

James Ratemo, The Standard, Kenya

Untamed disposal of electronics is hazardous, just as the improper handling of solid waste in the urban centres of Kenya. So far, there has been no shift towards sorting out waste at source as it is being done in progressive economies around the world. In Berlin, Germany, for instance, the government has nearly perfected garbage disposal, and now waste is sorted out at source, and recycling is a booming business. There are even special centres for depositing 'dead' electronic gadgets for recycling so that there is no danger of mixing e-waste with water or soil, which means a relatively safe environment.

500 million computers contain 716 million kg of lead

According to Mr Alfayo Ombuya, a Kenyan soil specialist and expert in horticulture, e-waste is considered dangerous, as certain components of electronic products contain materials that are hazardous. "Computers, televisions, VCRs, stereos, fax machines, electric lamps, cell phones, audio equipment and batteries if improperly disposed can leach lead and other substances into soil and groundwater," argues Ombuya. Many of these products can be reused, refurbished, or recycled in an environmentally sound manner. For example, PCs contain chlorinated and brominated substances, toxic gases, toxic metals, biologically active materials, acids, plastics and plastic additives. The Basel Action Network (BAN) estimates that 500 million computers alone contain 2.87 billion kilogrammes

of plastics, 716.7 million kilogrammes of lead and 286,700 kilogrammes of mercury. The average 14-inch monitor uses a tube that contains up to four kilogrammes of lead.

Electronic waste contaminates landfills

The big question is how many computers do we have in the developing world today and how many turn obsolete or break down each day? A baseline survey conducted locally a year ago shows that Kenya generates more than 3,000 tonnes annually. This is from breakdown of new and refurbished electronics, including computers. The lead from computers and other electronics can seep into the ground from landfills thereby contaminating water. If a computer tube is crushed and burned, it emits toxic fumes into the air. Sadly though, this could be what is happening in Kenya and the rest of the developing world as people have not fully embraced the art of e-waste management.

The Kenyan government needs to step up a campaign on proper e-waste management. Kenya is lucky to have the first e-waste management centre run by Computer for Schools Kenya (CFSK) in Nairobi. Despite the centre's capacity for handling 2,000 computers per day, says CFSK Executive Director Tom Musili, only 500 computers are channelled through the centre, meaning hundreds of broken-down computers and electronic gadgets are likely to lie at dumpsites, homes or offices.

E-waste management is going to be a necessity in developing countries. Most e-waste is toxic, and it contaminates the landfills.

Reporting on climate change is still a challenge

Henner Weithöner, IJ trainer, Berlin

Journalists from eleven developing countries attended the UN Climate Change Summit in Copenhagen, Denmark, on invitation by the IJ. A major point on their agenda was to raise the pivotal but still unanswered question, “How can rich countries combat climate change, and how can poor countries, which merely contribute to the climate issue but are most affected, achieve a sustainable development?”

Justus Wanzala, who has been working as an environmental journalist in Nairobi for many years, spoke about his own experience on how dramatically global warming affects people’s lives in his home country. “In Kenya more frequent and severe droughts caused by climate change hit farmers and pastoralists the hardest. Nearly 80 per cent of pastoralists’ livestock was lost in 2005 during a severe drought.”

Nevertheless, year after year the (industrialised) world pumps more than six billion tons of CO₂ emissions into the atmosphere by burning fossil fuel, despite a general consensus that this contributes to climate change. Almost 80 per cent of the world’s total energy is still provided by fossil fuels. And as emerging economies grow, their energy consumption also rises.

Most recent figures released by the United Nations at the Climate Change Conference in Copenhagen show a sharp rise in CO₂ emissions between 2002 and 2007. Research carried out for the UN found that the increase rate of emissions from burning fossil during this period was four times higher than between 1990 and 2000. According to the Stern’s review on climate change, due to this rise, it becomes increasingly difficult to hold levels of carbon dioxide in the atmosphere below the maximum of 550 parts per million.

These figures show how urgently the international community needs to talk about climate change and discuss possibilities to extend the Kyoto protocol beyond 2012. It also shows that it is definitely necessary to bring the emerging economies within the scope of mandatory emissions cuts.

Chinese media report more often on climate change

For the last two years, China has been the world’s biggest producer of carbon dioxide, the main greenhouse gas. This development increased concerns about China’s growing role in man-made global warming and put pressure on world leaders to seal a new global climate deal which includes the booming Chinese economy. Jie Feng, from the China Economic Herald and also an IJ alumna, reports

that Chinese media react to the enhanced public awareness of climate change. “China has produced large numbers of publications and TV features on climate change, set up a dedicated TV weather channel and an information database to disseminate knowledge about climate change through the mass media.”

Since the first report on climate change went to the news media in the fall of 1994, the climate change or “global warming” story continues to be one of the most compelling and most demanding in the field of environmental journalism. Finding local hooks and angles remains a challenge. Separating the scientific wheat from the chaff will never be easy. And how to draw a colourful picture of the ongoing climate debate which comprises interesting and appealing voices?

Juliana Radler, one of Brazil’s most experienced environmental journalists and a former participant of IJ training courses on environmental reporting, emphasises the crucial role of media challenged by the climate topic. “Global warming is a modern problem – complicated, involving the entire world, tangled up with difficult issues such as poverty, economic development and population growth. Dealing with it will not be easy. Ignoring it will be worse.”

Participants of an IJ environmental journalism course and their trainer Henner Weithöner are doing field research at a solar energy park.



Politics and Media Ethics

Media rely on **credibility and trust** – and they have to gain it constantly from their audience. They play an effective role in ensuring **transparent** and accountable **governance**. Mass media can **expose corruption** and keep a check on public policy by throwing a spotlight on government action, thus ensuring that elected representatives uphold their oaths of office and act in the interest of those who elected them. What applies for **political reporting** as such applies for **reporting on conflicts** and crises even more. The media have a critical influence in whether societies resort to violent conflict or not. Given their influence, **socially responsible journalists** are obliged to constantly consider and appraise their own and competing media's coverage of conflicts within and between their communities and borders. The IJ training courses on **political reporting**, **conflict sensitive reporting** and **media ethics** aim at enhancing the competence of media houses in this respective area. The **IJ Summer Academy** on “Freedom and responsibility in the media” for example is a programme with a core **four-week training course in Hamburg**, Germany, and regional two-week training courses in West Africa, Southern Africa and South Asia that are held every year. The programme gives the participants the opportunity to examine the **interdependence** between **quality and ethics** in journalism with the aim to empower journalists to make **ethical decisions** even under difficult circumstances.

"Massa Washington is a rare gem"

Segun Adeoye, TELL, Nigeria

Nobody gave her a second thought when she expressed her resolve to take up a career in journalism. Always being the only lady in the newsroom, she was usually given the task of merely reworking tons of press releases. "It is a man's world," some quipped. But for Massa Washington, such an environment was an auspicious moment to prove the stuff that she was made of – courage, strong will, and determination. It was like throwing a tea bag into hot water: it brings out the flavour of the tea. For more than 20 years now, Massa Washington has distinguished herself as a journalist par excellence.

Reporting at great personal risks on 14 years of civil war

She covered extensively the 14-year Liberian civil war, even from rebel occupied locations, at great risks to her life. For her courageous efforts, both as a journalist and humanitarian, during and after the war, Washington received the 2009 Liberian Woman of Courage Award from the US State Department. To name some of her laurels: she was Press Union Reporter of the Year, Inquirer Reporter of the Year in 1994, and won the 2003 Liberian Community Association of Pennsylvania Award. She received special recognition for distinguished leadership in 2004, given to her by the City of Philadelphia Welcoming Center for New Immigrants. In 2003, she was also awarded by the Association of Liberian Journalists in the Americas.

As a trainer in the IIJ "Freedom and responsibility in the media" training course in Accra, Ghana, in September 2009 she was simply remarkable, lecturing on "Survivors and victims: reporting on women and violence". Cecilia Ologunagba, a co-participant from Nigeria, was thrilled and described her as "a rare gem and a role model for up-and-coming journalists". Right from her childhood, Washington had discovered her innate love for people. "It seems that I am a humanitarian by nature," she says. "The truth is always the defence of a journalist, and journalists should be the moral conscience of the society, advocating for positive change." And positive thinking is her domain, as it seems. While covering the Liberian civil war she experienced threats and horrors. One day a rebel poked a knife stained with another victim's fresh blood into her nostril, threatening her to cut it off for having a nose that was not African. "I kept reciting the 23rd Psalm," says Washington, "and miraculously, he just let me go unharmed. Obviously, the 23rd Psalm of the Bible is a powerful tool for protection."

A strong advocate of women's rights

Washington is a commissioner with the Liberian Truth and Reconciliation Commission. Her past responsibilities include public relations officer of the Liberian National Red Cross Society, senior reporter for the Ministry's of Information New Liberian Newspaper, and news editor for the Independent Inquirer. During her time as chairwoman of the Delaware Valley Chapter of the Association of Liberian Journalists in the Americas, she co-owned and published the Iwina Heritage newspaper, with African immigrant communities in the US as its focus.

As a human rights activist and member of the Liberian Women Initiative, she advocates for the rights of women and has represented women of Liberia at peace conferences. She holds a Bachelor of Arts in mass communication with a focus on print journalism from the University of Liberia, and has had trainings in broadcast journalism.



After Massa Washington's lecture on "Survivors and victims: reporting on women and violence", she had even more admirers. Most of the participants were thrilled by what the Liberian journalist had to tell them on media ethics and how to report on wars, crises and conflicts. Here she was photographed with IIJ author Segun Adeoye.

Promote peace, not stereotypes with conflict sensitive reporting

Juliana Ezeoke, TELL, Nigeria

The training has come to a close and all participants have returned to their various countries, but the knowledge acquired from it remains evergreen. During the two-week capacity building programme in Accra, Ghana, all 15 participants, drawn from nine West African countries, were exposed to the causes of volatile and latent crisis situations that have ruined and have continued to destroy various African countries. The programme was organised by the International Institute for Journalism (IJ) of InWEnt, Germany.

The organisers, however, did not stop there. They went further to say that the media, as the fourth estate of the realm, should douse tension in such violence-ridden countries. Interestingly, it has been discovered that the media sometimes inadvertently aggravate violence through reportage. This perhaps explains why the IJ organised the programme entitled “The media’s role in conflict transformation and peace building.” Targeted at empowering West African journalists to be instrumental to peace building, the programme drew experts from different countries.

Understanding a conflict is crucial to reporting on it

Wolfram Zunzer, a German peace building expert and lecturer during the first week of the training, posited that conflict “does not always consist of physical combat.” Though a conflict may not be violent at the initial stage, he said, it could degenerate into a major crisis if it is badly handled. For a conflict to be constructively managed, Zunzer said that the media have a pivotal role to play. A good understanding of the conflict is required which is a fundamental necessity in conflict resolution. Again, the media should not only

identify the main actors in a conflict, but should also make extra effort to fish out those fuelling the conflict through underground support for the actors. The peace building expert also expects the media to identify and report those things that unite the warring parties rather than dwell on issues that divide them.

Sabine Hammer, special advisor on German and European Union Affairs to José Ramos-Horta, President of the Democratic Republic of Timor-Leste, said that while the media struggle to promote peace through their reporting, certain factors serve as stumbling blocks. Hammer, whose lectures touched on techniques of conflict sensitive reporting during the second week of the training, identified such inhibiting factors as imposed perceptions, stereotypes and the inability of the media to place stories in the right contexts. “In some countries,” she said, “it is believed that a certain tribe and people are the architects of all the crises that plague the country.” With such belief, Hammer said that some journalists would simply fall for the temptation of attributing all crises to such a tribe without proper investigations.

Lack of training and corruption are some major hindrance

Beyond stereotypes, Edetaen Ojo, executive director of Media Rights Agenda, Lagos, one of the guest lecturers, said that some of the problems of the media were, however, structural. Ojo identified lack of facilities in some media training institutions as well as the inability of some media houses to train journalists to enhance their skills as some of the factors that hindered the capacity of journalists to report effectively.

Another major problem is corruption. According to Ojo, many media houses do not pay their workers a living wage. Therefore, journalists in such organisations fall prey to unscrupulous politicians who may bribe them with an amount that far surpasses their monthly salary.

For the media to function well as a peace promoter, Zunzer said that the fourth estate should be objective and beware of sensational reporting. Ojo also suggested that media houses should give routine training to journalists to enhance their reporting skills, while Hammer advised that “journalists should do away with reports based on their personal perception of issues but should endeavour to investigate issues in order to inform and not misinform the public.”

The media should identify things that unite, not issues that divide.

Philippine journalism: a dangerous profession today more than ever

Antonia Koop, International Coordinator of PECOJON

PECOJON – The Peace and Conflict Journalism Network is an international network of journalists, filmmakers and journalism trainers who focus on implementing and mainstreaming a responsible and constructive reporting of conflict, crisis and war. It was founded in 2004 as a Philippine-German partnership project and has grown very fast into an international network reaching to Asia, Australia, Africa and Europe.

PECOJON offers training on peace and conflict journalism in Southeast Asia for journalists mainly from the Philippines, East Timor and Indonesia. The training courses are conducted in cooperation with the IJ.

More than 30 journalists were ambushed and killed on November 23, 2009 in Ampatuan town, Central Maguindanao, in what has come to be known as the Maguindanao Massacre. The International Federation of Journalists called the attack the worst incident of media killings ever recorded in

journalism history. In a context of political power struggle, an ongoing conflict and a heavily criticised but persistent culture of impunity in the Philippines, being a journalist has become increasingly dangerous. The recent event, however, leaves the media all over the world horrified and outraged.


And it provides a gloomy prospect for Philippine journalism and for the next Philippine elections.

Culture of impunity

The deaths of the 30 reporters in Maguindanao has once more exposed how challenging the environment is Philippine journalists work in. When joining a convoy of a local politician on the way to file candidacy for the upcoming 2010 elections, armed men stopped the cars and shot all those inside, burying their bodies later in hastily prepared graves to hide the attack. The ongoing investigation of the Philippine National Police has identified as prime suspects members of the family of



July 2009. When these journalists were grounded at a checkpoint by Philippine military they did what they were trained for and what they came for in the first place: they reported on their current situation. It was their courage and their ethos that finally set them free.



Maguindanao Governor Andal Ampatuan, patriarch of a powerful political clan whose members hold many central positions in Maguindanao.

Although a country under democratic rule the Philippines have one of the world's highest number of journalists killed in the line of duty. Philippine journalists don't lose their lives in crossfire but in targeted assassinations related to stories on corruption or political power struggle. Despite international pressure on the Philippine government to end the culture of impunity and improve protection of media practitioners those responsible hardly face consequences.

Need for solidarity to deal with risks

The media have developed their own strategies to deal with the problem. Despite the competitive nature of the media industry, the need for solidarity and collaboration among reporters and editors has become obvious. In July 2009, a group of 50 journalists from major media organisations responded to an invitation by PECOJON and several other Philippine media organisations to conduct a joined coverage in Datu Piang, Maguindanao. The story of concern was the situation of the evacuees displaced in the 2008 escalation of the conflict between Philippine government and the Moro Islamic Liberation Front (MILF).

Humanitarian aid organisations had raised their concern about the lack of access to the area that hosted many of the evacuation camps and a growing likeliness of food shortage and insufficient medical aid. As a

result of a military enforced media blackout no stories about the evacuees were reported by the Philippine media at that time. The journalists who joined the coverage were held for more than one hour at a military checkpoint and were refused access. However, pressured by the large number of reporters who immediately started reporting on the situation at the checkpoint the military finally opted to allow the journalists to enter.

Increasing risk versus growing need

The impact of the coverage on the evacuees highlighted the importance of independent media coverage especially for those areas

affected by conflict. The presence of the media in Datu Piang empowered the evacuees and triggered large protests against the war and continued fighting in Central Mindanao. However, the killings of 30 journalists and 27 other civilians in Ampatuan town on November 23, 2009 showed how naïve it is to expect respect for a press card or still believe that strength in numbers is a guarantee for safety. In an environment where the law is replaced by the rule of the jungle, where private armies are the instrument of control and politicians have the mind sets of war lords, journalists more and more often have to ask themselves if a story is worth the risk.

A press card never was a guarantee for safety. But with the situation in the Philippines deteriorating, journalists more often have to ask themselves if a story is worth the risk.

The media in Benin between hope and vigilance

Godefroy Macaire Chabi, ORTB, Benin

One of the most striking knock-on effects of Benin's transition to democracy since 1990 undoubtedly remains the liberalisation of the media world. The creation of approximately one hundred new radio stations, five television channels and more than one hundred newspapers has profoundly changed the landscape that until then had been marked by state predominance resulting in a near monopoly. This change of the media landscape went hand in hand with more press freedom, and Benin has been met with approval by international organisations committed to defending journalists' rights such as Reporters Without Borders.

However, in recent years the country lost some of its credit and fell to 72nd position in the Press Freedom World Index. The main reason is the authorities' attempt to control media information. Nevertheless, the media in Benin continue to be fairly promising. What inspires hope is the progressive growth of a specialised press compared to the situation a decade ago. In a flood of general-interest media only concerned with making "big money," a remarkably promising press has developed in recent years. Media houses are becoming increasingly interested in problems faced by our time such as the environment, health, education and fighting poverty. In short, the social interest shown by the media and the importance given to it by those involved might be a positive outlook. Media that largely involve the communities represent a clear standard with regard to the interaction between media and society in Benin.

Corruption is still a hassle in Benin

Nevertheless, training is an important challenge currently being tackled by Benin's media world. The media need to become more professional, and efforts are being made on the national level by the Haute Autorité de l'Audiovisuel et de la Communication (HAAC, the broadcasting authority), an organ which regulates the media

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But the media are
still progressing.

as well as other organisations such as the Observatoire de la déontologie et de l'éthique dans les médias (ODEM, the committee for media ethics) in order to reinforce the ability of Benin's media actors so that they meet international standards.

The economic empowerment of the media and media professionals is still needed. Low salaries, inadequate working conditions and lack of equipment for certain media branches – the list is long. The media in Benin encounter numerous difficulties. The best way of dealing with abuses linked to corruption in the press and infringements of professional ethics is curbing uncertainties related to the journalists' situation; it is no secret that a culture of blackmailing and intimidating journalists is developing in Benin, where many journalists can't make a living out of their salaries. If Benin aims to become a functioning democratic country, it will need its media. Therefore, it is necessary to establish a press that is not corrupt, with journalists who know their media ethics and who not only fight corruption but who themselves resist it.

Economic Journalism and Regional Integration

Globalisation has made countries and people more interdependent: goods, services, capital, labour, know-how and information move increasingly rapidly around the world. Hence, **economic globalisation** also transmits benefits as well as risks and volatility. In order to take responsible decisions in and for society it is crucial to **comprehend the impact** of these expanded economic and financial networks on the everyday life of people. This places a particular responsibility on the media which are asked to explain economic events to the people. **Journalists** can fulfil this role only if they understand the **complexity and all the facets of globalisation**. The same applies to the coverage of how governments use public funds and therefore affect the daily lives of all citizens. The media play a **crucial role** in facilitating a better-informed **public debate** about the focus of the budget and make governments more **accountable** for the implementation of the budget. In addition to its basic training courses on economic reporting the IJ therefore offers specialised courses such as **“Reporting on the budget.”** **Regional integration** again has proved to be an important tool to foster peace, stability and economic prosperity. For reporting on it in a **professional** manner journalists need to understand the concept of economic and regional intergration. In 2008, the **German Federal Foreign Office** entrusted **InWEnt** with the implementation of a project called “Capacity Building for the ASEAN Secretariat.” One of the three project components focuses on media and communication and seeks to **raise the awareness** about regional integration efforts of **ASEAN** through the media.

New order as MPs get power over budget in Kenya

Justus Ondari, Daily Nation, Kenya

Kenyans will have the opportunity to scrutinise budget preparation and implementation in advance due to reforms which have effectively watered down executive powers on resource allocation. A law passed in 2009 obliges the finance minister to explain to parliament the criteria which he will apply in the allocation of resources in the state budget. Slightly over five months since President Kibaki has signed the Fiscal Management Act, Kenyans – through parliament – will play a bigger role in the country’s budget process, which for long has been a preserve of treasury technocrats. A source at Treasury, who requested not to be identified, said draft regulations for the implementation of the act have been presented to the Attorney General for scrutiny before they are gazetted.

As means of detecting misuse of allocation and utilisation of resources, the Auditor and Controller General’s reports have always come too late. It is particularly significant for MPs who often complain of being “ambushed” by the finance minister since the act gives them a lot of room to monitor the budget from start to finish. Backed by advice from experienced professionals at Parliament’s Budget Office, the legislators will have no such excuses any longer.

More transparency in the budget making process

“The act is a positive move for Kenya since it divides the budget and financial management powers between the executive and the legislature,” Phyllis Makau, head of the budget office, told journalists during the IJ training programme “Reporting on the budget” in Nairobi in October 2009. By clearly spelling out the dates of submission of various documents as well as the level of details and formats of the entire budget process, MPs have time to prepare and contribute to the process. It all starts every year on March 21 when the Minister for Finance should make a budget policy statement – outlining the broad strategic macroeconomic issues. After consulting with the relevant committees about the policy state-

ment, the House’s Fiscal Analysis and Appropriation (Budget) Committee brings its report before the House in April, which is followed by the minister’s presentation of the annual estimates of revenues and expenditures in June for the succeeding financial year. Parliament shall scrutinise the estimates through various committees and report within 21 days. Under the act, the House can withhold funds if it is convinced that there has been material failure to implement parliament’s previous audit recommendations.

“What has been achieved with the act is to bring a sense of transparency and accountability to the budget making process,” Ms Makau told the journalists at the training course.

The act is a guarantee that any outgoing administration does not empty the state coffers during the campaigns and the incoming one does not misuse them and claim it got them empty. In this regard, the first compliance report shall be titled “The Pre-Election Fiscal Report,” providing details of all election-related expenditure and indirect election expenses such as additional allocations to the police and security forces.

“The budget reporting course in East Africa was a very successful experience to us.”

James Ratemo, The Standard, Kenya

ASEAN inaugurates human rights commission

Sri Wahyuni, Jakarta Post, Indonesia

The Association of Southeast Asian Nations (ASEAN) has unveiled a landmark regional human rights watchdog on October 23, as it inaugurated the ASEAN Intergovernmental Commission on Human Rights (AICHR) amidst criticism that it might be just another toothless organ.

The inauguration was held during the group's 15th summit official opening in the neighbouring seaside resorts of Hua Hin and Cha-am, in Prachuab Khiri Khan and Phetchaburi provinces. It was marked by Thai Prime Minister Abhisit Vejjajiva reading the Cha-am Hua Hin declaration on the AICHR establishment. "I think this is a significant development in the context of ASEAN," said Rafendi Djamin, an Indonesian representative of the newly inaugurated commission.

The commission comprises of representatives from the ten member states and will be chaired by a representative of the state holding the ASEAN chairmanship. Currently Sriprapha Petcharamesree, the former Director of the Office of Human Rights Studies and Social Development at Mahidol University (Thailand), is holding the position.

Human rights – no taboo anymore

Rafendi said that three or four years ago talking about human rights was still considered a taboo in the diplomatic circles of the ASEAN member countries. Now, however, it has been adopted as a principle in the ASEAN Charter and has even been translated into terms of reference that resulted in the establishment of the AICHR.

Criticism has been in the air even ahead of the inauguration ceremony, especially with regards to the non-interference prin-



Secretary-General of ASEAN Dr. Surin Pitsuwan meets IIJ alumni during an ASEAN conference in 2009 to discuss matters of regional integration.

ciple and weak protection mandate given to the commission.

Malaysian human rights activist, Yap Swee Seng, who is also executive director of the Thai-based Asia Forum, questions the independence of the commission, since most representatives were appointed by their governments and not transparently elected by an independent team. "The fact that the commission will also be funded by ASEAN and the budget has to be approved by the permanent representatives of ASEAN further raises doubt that the commission will be able to operate independently," Yap said.

Hope for more teeth

In his speech at the inauguration of the AICHR, Abhisit announced that the ASEAN member states have committed themselves to provide USD 200,000 as a start-up fund to support the activities of the commission during its first year of operation.

Abhisit acknowledged that there have been concerns on the mandate and functions of the AICHR raising the question if they go far enough. Yet, he said, "AICHR is not an end in itself but an evolutionary process towards strengthening the human rights architecture within the region."

Rafendi shares Abhisit's opinion, pointing to the fact that AICHR's terms of reference should be reviewed every five years after its entry into force to strengthen its mandate and functions and to further develop mechanism on both protection and promotion of human rights. "This is what Indonesia has been struggling for during the deliberation of the human rights commission in the high level panel for the past year," said Rafendi, who is at the moment the only representative from the civil society in the commission. And he added, "At least we have a tooth here in the commission. Hopefully, there will be more teeth growing."

People | Keeping track

Business affairs

Some 50 Bangladeshi journalists, media experts and trainers who had participated in IJ training courses in the last three decades have founded an IJ alumni chapter in Bangladesh. From now on the alumni in the South Asian country will meet and maintain a working network with the IJ and alumni from all over the world to further develop the media industry of Bangladesh. The initiative has been raised amongst others by Robaet Ferdous, Associate Professor at the Department of Mass Communication and Journalism, University of Dhaka, who had participated in a six-week "Training of Trainers" course organised by the IJ in Berlin in 2008.

Funke Adetutu, Nigeria, has been promoted to editor of the Business Life magazine.

Oluyinka Akintunde, Nigeria, has been seconded to Special Assistant on Communications and Strategy to the Minister of State for Finance in Nigeria.

Maaz I. Alnugomi, Sudan, is now newsdesk editor for Alakhbar Daily.

Norman P. Aquino, Philippines, is now editor at GMA Network.

Amara Camara, Guinea, is now press officer in the President's public relations office.

Dev Chatterjee, India, is now leading a team of reporters as corporate editor at Economic Times TV.

Nonor Daniel, Ghana, has been entrusted to take over and relaunch the business news content as business editor at The Ghanaian Chronicle.

Mohammad Ali Khan, Pakistan, has been elected Secretary General of the Peshawar Press Club for 2010.

Olayinka Oyebode, Nigeria, has assumed a new position as assistant editor for politics at The Nation Newspaper.

Olayinka Oyegbile, Nigeria, has accepted a new challenge as associate managing editor of NEXT, www.234next.com, newspaper.

Liberty Pinili, Philippines, has taken up a new position as business information manager to the Cebu Furniture Industries Foundation (CFIF).

Vusumuzi Sifile-Sibanda, Botswana, has been appointed editor of the Mirror Newspaper.

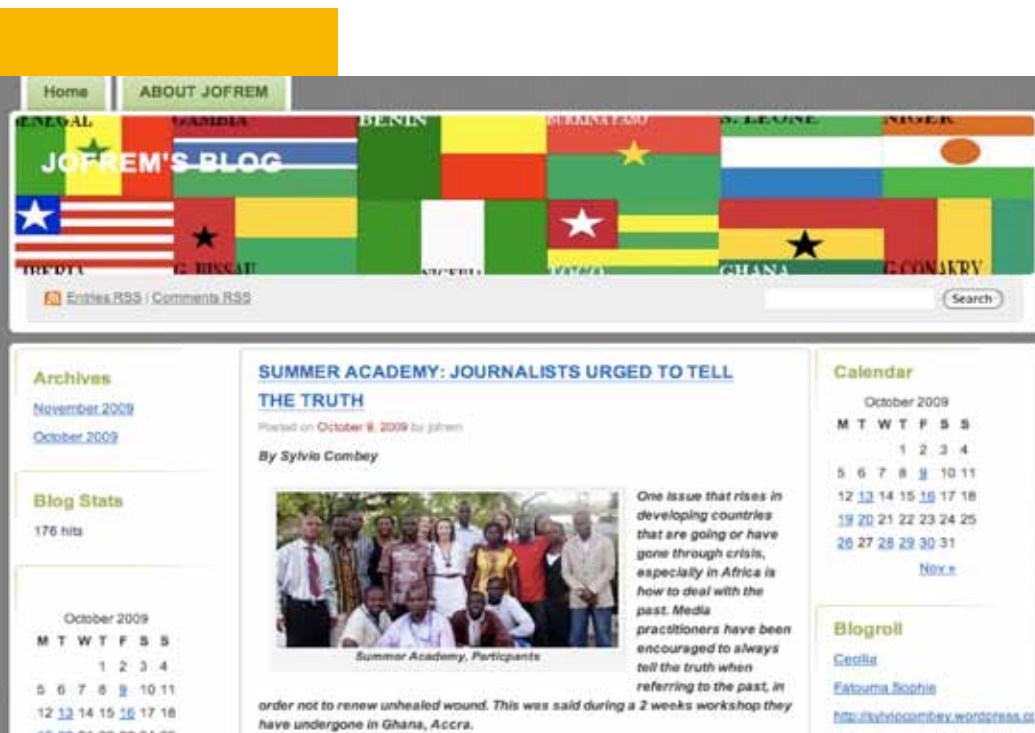
Malik Siraj Akbar, Pakistan, is editor-in-chief and founder of the first English language online newspaper in the Pakistan province of Balochistan, <http://thebalochhal.com>.

Said Lotfullah Najafizada, Afghanistan, is currently working as an editor-in-chief for an Afghan news agency based in Kabul.

Obituaries

Napoleon Salaysay, Philippines, was killed in the Mindanao massacre on November 23 when more than 50 people lost their lives. Salaysay, who was a reporter with the Mindanao Bulletin, participated in the 2006 and 2007 courses on peace and conflict reporting the IJ conducted in cooperation with PECOJON.

Chinyeke Tembo, Malawi, of Journalists Against Aids in Malawi, died on December 2.



In 2009, 15 participants of the IJJ summer academy “Freedom and responsibility in the media” for journalists from ECOWAS member states founded their own weblog to not only keep in contact, but to inform each other and interested people from all over the world on ECOWAS politics and journalism.

Award winners

Anas Aremeyaw Anas, The New Crusading Guide Newspaper and ace reporter of AfricaNews, Ghana, received the second prize for Africa 2009, Lorenzo Natali Prize, for his masterpiece on the “Chinese mafia sex” in the West African nation.

Frank Chikowore, Zimbabwe, has received the Tully Centre Free Speech Award given by Syracuse University to defenders of press freedom.

Johanes Heru Margianto, Indonesia, participant of the IJJ Multimedia and Online Journalism course in 2009, won the “My Capacity Building” photo competition announced by InWEnt.

Sylvia Juuko and Ibrahim Kasita, Uganda, won the Young Achievers Award in the business journalism category 2009. The competition was announced by the Uganda National Chambers of Commerce and Industry in cooperation with GTZ.

Steve Mbogo, Kenya, editor of the Business Daily newspaper, has been nominated as one of 15 winners of the Earth Journalism Awards, rewarding excellence in climate change reporting.

Richard Mgamba, Tanzania and editor of the Guardian on Sunday, won the first prize for Africa 2009, Natali Prize, for his article “The battle for souls”.

Paul Nyakazeya, Zimbabwe and reporter at the Standard, has been nominated Financial Reporter of the year, Property Reporter of the year and Water reporter of the year.

Martin Luther Oketch, Uganda, was awarded as the country’s best economic and financial journalist of the year 2009 by the Capital Markets Authority, Uganda.

Prof. Saqib Riaz, Mass Communication Department of the Allama Iqbal Open University Islamabad, Pakistan, has been awarded PhD degree in Mass Communication.

Moussa Zongo, Burkina Faso, won the third prize for his article “Bread underground at the price of rashness”.

InWEnt – Capacity Building International, Germany, is a non-profit organisation with worldwide operations dedicated to human resource development, advanced training, and dialogue. Our capacity building programmes are directed at experts and executives from politics, administration, the business community, and civil society. We are commissioned by the German federal government to assist with the implementation of the Millennium Development Goals of the United Nations. In addition, we provide the German business sector with support for public private partnership projects. Through exchange programmes, InWEnt also offers young people from Germany the opportunity to gain professional experience abroad.

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Multimedia and Online Journalism

General courses: Feb 1-April 1 (fully booked), Berlin, Germany / June 7-Aug 6, Berlin, Germany / Oct 11-28, Berlin, Germany / Nov 1-15, Hanoi, Vietnam / **In cooperation with Asian College of Journalism:** Feb 1-March 12 (3 courses), Chennai, India

Media Ethics and Politics

Summer Academy: Jul 25-Aug 20, Hamburg, Germany. For young journalists from all over the world / May 24-Jun 4, Chennai, India. For young journalists from SAARC countries / Sep 28-Oct 9, Accra, Ghana. For young journalists from ECOWAS countries / Nov 8-19, Johannesburg, South Africa. For young journalists from SADC countries / **Media in Conflict:** May 4-15, Accra, Ghana / **Media in Conflict Asia:** Philippines, Indonesia and East Timor, please refer to our partner's website: www.pecojon.org / **Reporting Politics: Good Governance and Elections**, Aug 20-Sep 24, Berlin, Germany. For journalists from print and online media in Asia, Africa, Middle East

Economic and Financial Journalism

Regional Integration: Feb 22-Mar 22, Dakar, Senegal. For journalists from CEDEAO countries / Feb 15-26, Jakarta, Indonesia / Apr 5-16, Jakarta, Indonesia. For journalists from ASEAN countries / Aug, Johannesburg, South Africa. For journalists from SADC countries / **Economic and Financial Reporting:** Feb 1-Apr 1, Berlin, Germany / June 12-17, Damascus, Syria / Mar 13-17, Amman, Jordan / **Reporting on the Budget:** Oct 11-22, Nairobi, Kenya / **Covering Poverty Reduction:** Oct, New York, USA

Environmental Journalism

General course: June 6-Jul 30, Berlin, Germany. For environmental journalists from Asia, Africa, Middle East

Media Management

Newspaper Management: Oct 18-29, Berlin, Germany

Conferences

IIJ/FAZ International Media Conference: Mar 18, Berlin, Germany
Global Media Forum: Jun 21-23, Bonn, Germany

