

About Pecojon

The Network

PECOJON is an international network of print, radio and broadcast journalists, filmmakers and journalism teachers who focus on implementing and mainstreaming responsible and high quality reporting of conflict, crisis and war.

To secure and improve the quality of local, national and international conflict and war coverage, PECOJON offers practical tools and support for journalists, facilitates media ethical discussions and offers trainings especially in the field of conflict analysis and conflict sensitive journalism.

PECOJON was founded in 2004 as a Philippine-German partnership project and fast grew into an international network with members from Asia, Australia, Africa and Europe.

Objectives:

The PECOJON Network aims to build up and continuously improve a support system for journalists working for conflict sensitive and responsible reporting.

Further objectives are

- Implementing a refined journalistic framework (Code of Conduct)
- Building exchange and interaction among journalists on an international level
- Improving journalism through trainings and education
- Improving safety and security for journalists

The ethical code of PECOJON-The Peace and Conflict Journalism Network is based on the basic journalistic principles of impartiality, accuracy and fairness. However, analysis of media coverage of conflicts - with special attention to the Gulf Wars and the Balkan region - has shown that the traditional framework does not necessarily guarantee a responsible and conflict sensitive reporting. PECOJON members decided to add a second layer to their traditional framework.

Diversity:

While covering conflicts and wars journalists of the network try to approach their stories from various angles and search for various explanations instead of just following mainstream interpretations and storylines. They also search for uncommon or untold stories that show various perspectives on the situation.

Multi-Sourcing:

To guarantee a broad perspective and avoid partiality the journalists consult many different sources even if time and financial pressure are limiting the chance to investigate a story in depth.

People in Focus:

Aside from elites who are traditionally in focus of journalistic attention also non-elite people or groups are important sources. Especially when covering conflicts and war, to avoid being used as a propaganda instrument, journalists have to pay attention also to what ordinary people have to tell. Often they know even better about the situation than officials.

Context:

Any event reported has to be embedded in the context of the situation. The reader and audience should be provided as much information about the context as possible. This is necessary to avoid misinterpretation and the creation of prejudices that lead to further escalation of the conflict situation.

Presentation of Information/Transmission:

Core task of the journalist is to deliver information to the public. To make information understandable is part of this process of transmitting information towards readers and audience. The journalist has to be aware of the sensitivity of this process and tries while processing the information to maintain its truthfulness. Beyond presenting "just facts" this also means we have to anticipate what role and meaning the information has in the context of the conflict.

Cultural Sensitivity:

Coverage of conflicts and war as any foreign report needs deeper understanding of the culture of the country and people in focus.

Process or Solution Orientation:

Conflict coverage should not be limited to reporting violent events and incidents. Journalists have to also keep an open ear for any upcoming solutions and positive developments. An event has to be seen in its chronological context.

Truth Orientation:

Core of the journalist's task is to search for the truth and make it accessible for the public. Truthfulness should

never be compromised for personal or organizational gain.

Reliability:

The journalist's credibility also depends on his reliability, regarding not only the accuracy of the report. Reliability includes the continuance of the publishing, the consequence in style and presentation, maintaining quality but also the protection of sources and the respect for an "of record" given information.

Language Sensitivity:

To be able to give unbiased and correct reports journalists need a fine sense for what words to use. Beyond just using an elegant writing style they have to be aware of what certain keywords mean in the context of a conflict and for the actors involved and what stories already burden those words.

Creativity:

To cover a conflict in a non-escalating way working along an ethical framework like the one above demands a lot of creativity. The higher the pressure regarding time and money the more creativity a journalist needs to be able to produce quality.

On the other hand it is our creativity and our instinct that lead us to those stories that really matter.

Journalists of the PECOJON Network are committed to a conflict sensitive and responsible journalism. We continuously develop and refine techniques of analyzing and reporting conflict situations. The code of conduct is not an inflexible set of rules but based on experience and discussions among members and experts and develops with the growing experience of the network and related research.

Structure of the Network

PECOJON is a members-based organization. The organizational structure of the network varies from country to country depending on the local situation and domestic law.

Every country has a National Coordinator (NATCO), who is contact person for all national concerns, and a National Secretariat (NATSEC) handling projects, activities and administrative issues. The International Secretariat (INTERSEC) is responsible for handling international concerns and administrative issues that concern the complete network.

PECOJON is not a hierarchical organization but a network that serves as a support and communication structure. It is based on a journalists-for-journalists approach.

In this form the network is built to be support and backup for its members, to improve

- Free information flow
- Information quality
- Response time
- Journalists education
- Multiperspective view on international conflicts
- And journalists safety and security…

…with the ultimate goal of enabling a responsible and conflict sensitive reporting breaking the devils circle of media abuse and self-created instrumentation.

Media has a core role in society. As information transmitter between people and their governments and mirror of society's discourses, a healthy and independent media allows democracies to grow. Only if journalists are willing and able to fulfill this role a healthy and peaceful democratic community can develop.