

WJEC-3 Syndicate Report, July 5, 2013, Mechelen, Belgium

### **3(a). Young Journalists on Global Issues**

*Meeting summary report by rapporteurs Derek Thorne, One World Media, UK, and Tobias Troll, Concord Europe, Belgium; syndicate experts and background report authors Patrick Leusch, DW Akademie, Germany, and Stefan Verwer, Lokaalmondiaal, the Netherlands; chairs Fackson Banda, UNESCO, France, and Verwer; and team members.\**

Participants agreed that to truly understand local issues, one must understand their regional, national and global context. Accordingly, they argued that reporting on and explaining these connections should be an essential part of journalism education and training young/future journalists. Participants also agreed that global reporting is not about reporting on a particular place or places; it is about an approach to journalism – making connections.

They agreed “exotic” associations with global coverage need to be challenged since, in reality, global connections are with us all of the time – they are part of our everyday lives.

And they discussed key features global reporting should encourage, including collaboration, modesty (a need to accept that one cannot know everything), being informed but curious, challenging one’s own perspectives, stereotypes, assumptions and dominant narratives and pursuing new angles and perspectives.

They agreed dominant narratives about global reporting and the media need to be challenged. For example, global reporting entails much more than just covering developing countries’ news. In addition, global reporting should not assume that Western countries’ problems are echoed worldwide. For example, Western media industries’ financial difficulties are not being shared in India and China today.

The group also looked at issues on a more pragmatic level. For example, student journalists need to be taught to engage and inform their specific audiences. They also must learn about communication technologies and how they can help them make global connections. The group agreed that a global reporting mindset – one that sees the world’s interconnectedness – would improve the quality of a journalist’s overall reporting, not just his coverage of “other places.”

It discussed a key practical recommendation: teaching journalism students to collaborate. Since collaboration can be practiced on a basic level, beginning with students working with their own classmates, it’s relatively easy to teach/practice. Students could also collaborate with local journalism students in other schools, local journalists, local community members, etc., and, online (or via travel when possible) with regional, national and international sources. However, the group agreed that in order for students to truly accept collaboration as a valuable tool in their reporting arsenal, they would need to develop a new, less competitive attitude to their work.

The group also stressed the need to provide journalism students with strong examples of how high quality global reporting can shine valuable light on important local issues. For example, one participant spoke of a local story about a terrorist attack in Bulgaria that did not make much sense until events in many countries – and their connection to the Bulgarian attack – were explained/reported. And another spoke of how a lack of quality global reporting of the European debt crisis – strong connections with IMF structural adjustment programs were often not even considered – led to weak coverage.

### ***Recommendations***

*After a final meeting between parallel groups, this combined syndicate group agreed on the following recommendations for colleagues worldwide:*

1. Global reporting should be taught as an approach/mindset that looks for interconnections linking different parts of the globe.
2. Educators should expose their students to different realities, which may take students out of their comfort zone. For example, faculty can start by introducing students to local diverse students, faculty and community members, facilitating online meetings and encouraging international travel when possible.
3. Educators should encourage collaboration (with students, journalists, etc.) as a core element of journalism and facilitate it wherever possible. Students need to possess the ability and motivation to collaborate and to view their work as a co-production. Collaborations should be long-term, ongoing, reciprocal, well-organized, culturally sensitive, well-supported (potentially by staff) and able to produce quality media output. Such collaboration, an ultimate benefit for all students, can encourage institutional buy-in.
4. The journalism curriculum should be global throughout. Since the mindset of global reporting can benefit new journalists in all areas of practice, it should not be considered a specialization.
5. Educators should share their approaches to, and experience with, global reporting with their counterparts worldwide. A network should be developed allowing educators to connect with one another and to collaborate for everyone's mutual benefit. The WJEC could be a perfect "central hub" for such sharing and/or hosting a network.

*\*Additional Young Journalists on Global Issues participants: Julia Bayer, DW Akademie, Germany; Ellen van Overmeire, Plantijn Hogeschool, Belgium; Kwinten Rummens, Thomas More Mechelen, Belgium; Daya Thussu, University of Westminster, UK; Hannah Eigeman, Lokaalmondiaal, Netherlands; Paul Werkman, Hogeschool Windesheim Zwolle, The Netherlands; Eva de Vries, Lokaalmondiaal, The Netherlands; Maria Neykova, Sofia University, Bulgaria; Marinka Vukojevic, Free Press Unlimited, The Netherlands; Paulo Nuno Vicente, New University of Lisbon, Portugal; Svetlana Hristova, Beyond Your World project, Bulgaria; Mei Ling Hopgood, Northwestern University, USA; Yinka Kehinde, DW Academy, Germany; Iris de Roover, Thomas More Mechelen, Belgium; Andreia Martins, Coolpolitics,*

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