



Social media for social change

Training Manual on Investigative Citizen Journalism

Pakistan Youth Change Advocates

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Abbreviations

Pakistan Youth Change Advocates	PYCA
World Trade Organization	WTO
National Press Club	NPC
United States	US
Azad Jammu and Kashmir	AJK



Profile of the Writer:

Myra Imran works as a Staff Reporter for The News. She is an award-winning journalist and is the current Chairperson Communications and Development for National Press Club (NPC), Islamabad.

Myra mainly reports on human rights especially issues related to women and children. In 2010, the Supreme Court ordered legislation on acid crime following one of her stories on an acid burn victim who managed to take her case to the higher courts despite social odds.

She has done several interviews for her paper besides covering extensively the human rights situation in the country. She has also reported for Radio Pakistan and has been on several television talk shows. She also manages the gender section of the website JournalismPakistan.com. She is a qualified leadership and media management trainer for Women Learning Partnership and Search for Common Grounds.

Myra was declared 'Media Woman of the Year' by the Excellence Award Foundation and the Ministry of Information and Broadcasting, Pakistan, in 2009. The following year, she was presented the 'Benazir Women in Leadership Award' by the Ministry of Human Rights. The Acid Survivors Foundation and White Ribbon Campaign also honored her with awards for her contributions to protection of violence victims. Similarly, the Defense of Human Rights Organization, gave her an award for giving voice to families of missing persons.

She has directed a documentary on the post-earthquake situation in Balakot, one of the worst affected areas in the October 2005 earthquake. She has participated in several panel discussions and has spoken as guest speaker on the role of media in national and regional conferences.

Myra is a US government's International Visitors Leadership Program (IVLP) fellow and has attended hands-on training on social media in Denmark. She is on the visiting faculty of International Islamic University and has delivered lectures to students and faculty of Allama Iqbal Open University, Islamabad.



Foreword

This manual forms part of the project titled “Fostering Citizen and Investigative Journalism amongst Youth.” The project seeks to enhance plurality and diversity in Pakistani media through strengthened capacity of youth in universities and provision of an effective platform (in the form of Pakistan’s first ever youth-led citizen portal) for information-sharing with a wider audience. To meet this goal, the project will build the capacity of 800 university students. It will not only capacitate Pakistani youth learn the importance of citizen journalism but will in fact play an important role in shaping the practices of future journalists by inculcating the principles of investigative and (hence), responsible journalism. Moreover, by providing young people with a platform for reliable information-sharing with a larger national and even international audience, the project will significantly amplify the voices of young citizens who otherwise are often unable to make their mark in the mainstream media.

Finally, the successful achievement of the project's goals and objectives will put in place a youth-led watchdog for mainstream media that will help highlight stories that affect and matter to the common citizen.



Pakistan Youth Change Advocates

Pakistan Youth Change Advocates (PYCA) is a national civil society organization, working to promote peace and development through youth participation. PYCA was established with the long-term vision for Pakistan “where the value of education, good governance and ultimately human life and well-being reigns supreme.”

PYCA currently has partnerships with 25 public and private sector universities and colleges across 20 districts in all the four provinces of Pakistan as well as Islamabad Capital Territory and AJK.

So far PYCA has capacitated 2,000 young people in 25 university campuses across the four provinces of the country and AJK region on peacefully countering violent extremism, story-telling, advocacy and social entrepreneurship. Social media activism and effective message dissection remain cross-cutting themes.



Overview

Social media has turned every citizen into a journalist. The biggest strength as well as weakness of social media is that its users enjoy complete freedom to post any kind of information and opinion without any check and accountability whatsoever. As majority lacks training on basic journalism ethics, responsible use of this medium is a big challenge all around the world, especially in Pakistan.

Training Manual on Investigative Citizen Journalism is an effort to help fill this gap. It presents exercise-based modules for the two-day training of university students on applying basic principles of investigative journalism while practicing citizen journalism. These easy to apply modules are aimed at creating awareness among youth on ways to authenticate information and sensitize them on the impact responsible citizen journalism can have in bringing a positive social change.



Modules and Activities:

Introduction

Module I: Current State of Affairs in News Media

Module II: Basic Principles of Investigative Journalism

Module III: Basic Principles of Citizens Journalism

Module IV: Application of Basic Principles of Investigative Journalism on Citizen Journalism



Introduction of Participants:

The participants will be asked to name a journalist they can associate themselves with and describe five reasons for doing so.

Module I:

Current State of Affairs in News Media

No one can deny the overwhelming power media enjoys in influencing the life of others. It has access to power corridors and the capacity to represent the deprived. It can bring about a positive change in society as it acts as a bridge between the powerful and the weak.

The vibrant Pakistani media has contributed significantly in creating awareness among general public on national and international politics, human rights, democracy and has helped a lot in ensuring transparency.

However, there are some gray areas that are becoming more and more obvious. With the introduction of hundreds of private television channels in the past decade, Pakistani media is often found lacking when it comes to professionalism.



Owing to current geo-political situation in the country, the priorities of both print and electronic media are linked to national politics and security situation while challenges faced by general public are often ignored or covered in a way that it fails to bring about any positive change in the society.

Information transferred through media has an impact on the society. When a gap is left in reporting the right information in the right manner, the impact is negative. To minimize this impact, stress is laid on ethical journalism which follows accuracy, impartiality, balance, fairness, privacy and pluralism (Refer to Information bank 1). The following exercises are meant to develop an understanding of the impact on the society.

EXERCISE:

Participants will be divided into three groups. Videos of public interest stories will be shown to them and feedback obtained on the impact of wrong, incomplete or improper reporting.

1: Ghost at Kaarsaaz (<http://www.dailymotion.com/video/x2lumzb>)

2: Girl murdered in Rawalpindi

<http://www.samaa.tv/social-buzz/2015/11/facebook-friendship-leads-to-death-of-chakwal-girl/>

3: Lahore blast

http://www.dailymotion.com/video/x40ay34_lahore-blast-gulshan-iqbal-park-latest-news-27-03-16_news

Questions:

- 1: In what category it falls -wrong reporting/incomplete reporting/unethical reporting?
- 2: Identify critical social dynamics involved in this story?
- 3: Identify the principles of ethical journalism violated in this story?
- 4: What change would you suggest in the story to make it more professional?



Module II:

Basic Principles of Investigative Journalism

There are different definitions of investigative journalism in traditional print and electronic media. Overall, investigative journalism is digging deep into an issue or topic. It never provides an instant story. Instead, it goes through recognized stages of planning and reporting, and has to work to accepted standards of accuracy and evidence.

The issue or topic covered by an investigative journalist has to be of public interest. Public interest means that either a community will be disadvantaged by not knowing this information, or will benefit (either materially or through informed decision-making) by knowing it.

Although an investigative story can start with a tip, simply reporting the tip, or printing the secret document that is anonymously faxed through to you, is not investigative journalism. In



fact, doing such a thing may be both lazy and careless. It carries huge risks, since you have not investigated the identity, bona fides or motives of your source or the authenticity of the evidence. You may end up defaming someone, printing lies or being framed by somebody's agents. Instead, you must develop hypotheses about what the tip means and plan additional research, decide on the relevant questions, and go out to ask them. You must see evidence, and hear and analyze answers for yourself, and go beyond simply verifying the tip.

In addition, an investigative story produces new information or puts together previously available information in a new way to reveal its significance. It should be multi-sourced as single source can provide fascinating revelations and access to insights and information that would otherwise be hidden. But until the story from that source is cross-checked against other sources – experiential, documentary and human – and its meaning is explored, no real investigation has happened.

Another definition that connects more to citizen journalist says that investigative reporting is simply good reporting. This definition comes out of the traditional view of journalists as 'watchdogs', whose mission is to highlight wrongs, point fingers at those to blame, and report in a way that brings about change. When reporters are successful in this effort, life may genuinely get better.

Activity:

Participants will be divided into three groups and will be provided with chits mentioning different steps involved in an investigative story. They will be asked to examine and rearrange those steps and later present them before the participants. Later, the presenter will explain the rationale behind the order they have come up with.

The topic of a public interest story can be "Sanitation Issue in Suburban Areas." The chit will feature the following steps:

- Decide relevant questions
- Go out to ask questions
- Visit to the area
- Collection of images
- Review of available literature
- Assessment of the impact
- Expert opinion
- Version of government officials



- Connect to source in relevant department
- Approval of news desk
- Collection of facts
- Permission from the locals
- Identification of segments affected by lack of sanitation
- Identifying story angle
- Story frame
- Start writing the story

Module III:

Basic Principles of Citizens Journalism

The concept of Citizen Journalism is based upon public citizens playing an active role in the process of collecting, reporting, analyzing, and disseminating news and information proving that the mainstream media reporters and producers are not the only exclusive center of knowledge on a subject.



The idea behind citizen journalism is that people without professional journalism training can use the tools of modern technology and the global distribution of the Internet to create, augment or fact-check media on their own or in collaboration with others. For example, you might write about a city council meeting on your blog or in an online forum or you could fact-check a newspaper article from the mainstream media and point out factual errors or bias on your blog or you might snap a digital photo of a newsworthy event happening in your town and post it online or you might videotape a similar event and post it on a site such as You Tube.

All these might be considered acts of journalism, even if they don't go beyond simple observation at the scene of an important event. Because of the wide dispersion of so many excellent tools for capturing live events — from tiny digital cameras to videophones — the average citizen can now make news and distribute it globally, an act that was once the domain of established journalists and media companies. Example: Shahzeb Khan Case (Information Bank).

New media technologies such as social networking and media-sharing websites in addition to the increasing prevalence of cellular phones have made citizen journalism more accessible to people worldwide. The accessibility of online media has also enhanced the interest for journalism among youth and many websites. Due to the availability of technology, citizens often can report breaking news more quickly than traditional media reporters. Example: The killing of Osama Bin Laden (Refer to Information Bank).

There are many prejudices against citizen journalism, especially by professionals in the field. Citizen journalists are often portrayed as unreliable, biased and untrained – as opposed to professionals who have “recognition, paid work, unionized labor and behavior that is supposed to be politically neutral and unaffiliated, at least in the claim if not in the actuality”. Citizen journalists gather material by being on the streets. Their tools can be narrowed down to a camera, social media and an instinct to start recording whenever something seems out of order. Most of their knowledge regarding the issues that are raised is obtained through their experience as a part of the community.

Basic principles of citizen journalism are:

- 1: Report should be precise, to the point, short in presentation
- 2: It must be engaging, able to attract Internet users and can arouse curiosity among them.
- 3: It must ensure accuracy, thoroughness, transparency, fairness, impartiality and independence.
- 4: Check on conflicts of interest and partisan.



Activity:

Participants will be shown a video and will be asked to analyze it on the basis of ethical journalism.

Attack on Junaid Jamshed

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=GTpXFY5gukY>

Rehman Malik off loaded:

http://www.dailymotion.com/video/x2613sq_pia-passengers-throw-rehman-malik-off-the-flight_fun



Module IV:

Application of Basic Principles of Investigative Journalism on Citizen Journalism

Dynamics of media has changed to a great extent during the past decade as the social media has involved citizens - once the receivers of information - as disseminators of information. It has provided them a platform to express themselves and play a wider role in social change.

When social media is used for dissemination of knowledge, the user enters the ambit of journalism which is originally defined as gathering, processing and dissemination of information related to an audience. The promise of real journalism therefore is that it gives readers and viewers not a fantasy, a vacation, a pitch, or an argument, but factually-grounded information.

Social media is fast becoming a lifestyle for the urban population in Pakistan, especially youth. The introduction of mobile broadband coupled with the affordable smart phones had a catalytic effect on the use of social media in Pakistan. Youth is fast turning to this form of media to voice their opinions, share experiences, give suggestions and feedback on any topic or constituent of the society instead of using traditional sources of information like newspapers, magazine and even television etc.

The tools for citizen journalism are unlimited ranging from websites, blogging, Google groups to Storify, Facebook and Twitter. Among the most popular social platforms, Facebook leads the way in Pakistan with more than 17.2 million user accounts. Twitter is also fast becoming the preferred social media platform with more than 280 million people joining this platform every day.

Thus social media now has a huge impact on society as well as public policies. Various state and regulatory authorities, military public relations, civil governments, and political parties make use of the social media tools to make announcements, deliver messages and get first hand



public feedback. On the other hand, political parties, private organizations, public forums and even religious parties extensively use this media to reach out to the general public.

Unfortunately, the use of social media in Pakistan faces some inherent barriers and challenges that require attention and collaborative effort of all the stakeholders to come up with strategies to bring ethics in this form of media so that the negative impact can be minimized.

To a great extent, social media in Pakistan is flooded with information that is not authentic or checked and is used for maligning individuals or an entity instead of contributing in shaping a better society and systems. It is also very systematically being used by religious extremists to propagate their agendas. These negative trends remain unchecked and unanswered as systematic positive use of social media is not being practiced widely.

In this situation, there is a dire need to create awareness on the positive and constructive use of social media and professional and responsible way of information dissemination.

Activity:

The participants will be given five minutes to identify a social issue that is close to their heart, one that the mainstream media has not covered well. They will be asked to give five reasons for being so sensitive about that issue. It could be a public issue such as drinking water safety, the condition of local roads, scarcity of parks and playgrounds, etc. They could already be deeply engaged in social service of some kind such as children's rights, health issues etc. The activity will be performed at the start of the day.

Project:

The participants will be asked to go around the university and bring a public interest story in the shape of a picture, short video, write up, sound bite etc and present that before the participants for discussion and feedback. The story should not exceed one minute or 150 words.



Information Bank

1: Principles of Ethical Journalism

Fairness: In journalism, fairness requires not favoring one viewpoint over another in collecting and presenting news and opinion. The story should include different viewpoints presented accurately, even those with which journalists personally disagree. It must give people, companies or organizations that are criticized in reporting the opportunity to present their points of view prior to publication, in the same story. The journalist is not supposed to suppress relevant available facts, or give distorting emphasis. He or she should do their utmost to give a fair opportunity for reply.

Impartiality: The journalists need to avoid stereotyping by race, gender, age, religion, ethnicity, geography, disability, physical appearance or social status. He or she should develop an ability to incorporate opposing points of view.

Accuracy: Test the accuracy of information from all sources and exercise care to avoid inadvertent error. Deliberate distortion is never permissible. Use information that is independently verifiable. Aim to attribute information to its source. Where a source seeks anonymity, do not agree without first considering the source's motives and any alternative attributable source. Where confidences are accepted, respect them in all circumstances. Disclose conflicts of interest that affect, or could be seen to affect, the accuracy, fairness or independence of your journalism. Do not improperly use a journalistic position for personal gain. Journalists should be as transparent as possible about sources and methods so audiences can make their own assessment of the information; avoid conflict of interest.



Balance: Give both sides of an argument in a fair way so readers or listeners can make up their own mind. Journalists must leave it to the listeners or readers to make their own judgment. A professional journalist is not supposed to suppress relevant available facts, or give distorting emphasis. Give a representative picture of all constituent groups in a story.

Privacy: Be extra sensitive towards private grief and personal privacy. Journalists should resist compulsion to intrude in private spaces. Minimize harm for everyone. Don't go after or disclose private information unless it is in total public interest. Use utmost tact in sensitive cases. Avoid all that may cause unnecessary pain or humiliation to the innocent, or those who have suffered.

Pluralism: Give voice to the voiceless. Official and unofficial sources of information can be equally valid. Tell the story of the diversity and magnitude of the human experience boldly, even when it is unpopular to do so. Accommodate marginalized voices to prevent domination of a single version. Seek to capture in stories the diverse values, viewpoints and lives of the people in the communities.

Sources of definitions and explanations:

1. *Society of Professional Journalists*
2. *Canadian Association of Journalists*
3. *All Pakistan Newspaper Society*
4. *Center for Journalism Ethics*
5. *Journalism Project - Pew Research Center*
6. *EthicNet*
7. *Council of Europe – Journalism Ethics*

(Credit: The information was gathered by Coalition of Ethical Journalism (CEJ) working in Pakistan since year 2013 with Rozan as its secretariat. The concept of Pluralism was added by Rozan considering social realities of Pakistan.)

2: Psychological impact of incomplete or unethical reporting:

- 1: Anxiety
- 2: Stress
- 3: Irritability
- 4: Depression
- 5: Fear



6: Blood Pressure

7: Insecurity

8: Distrust

9: Lack of self-confidence

10: Grief

11: Negativity

Source: *The impacts were pointed out after detailed discussion with Psychotherapist Dr Khadija Tahir. Dr Khadija Tahir is a graduate of King Edward Medical College, Lahore. After gaining experience as a medical practitioner she branched into psychotherapies.*

She got her training in Cognitive Behavior Therapy and Solution Focused Therapy from London. She was trained in Eye Movements Desensitization and Reprocessing from University of Birmingham.

Dr Khadija Tahir has served the earthquake victims and acid burn victims. In April 2011 she left for London to gain experience in marital therapy and got certified as an Emotionally Focused Therapist from the Tavistoc Centre for couple relations.

She has her clinic in Islamabad where she helps clients with marital problems, depression, anxiety, phobias and other psychological problems.

3: Types of Citizen Journalism:

In 'What is Participatory Journalism?', J. D. Lasica classifies media for citizen journalism into the following types:

1. Audience participation (User comments attached to news stories, personal blogs, photographs or video footage captured from personal mobile cameras, or local news written by residents of a community)
2. Independent news and information websites
3. Full-fledged participatory news sites (Journalismpakistan.com etc)
4. Collaborative and contributory media sites (Asia Online etc)
5. Other kinds of "thin media" (mailing lists, email newsletters)
6. Personal broadcasting sites (video broadcast sites)



Richard Sambrook of the BBC lists following basic types of journalism done by citizen reporters:

1. The use of eyewitness accounts, pictures and video.
2. The integration of user comment or blogs into news coverage.
3. News broken on the web. Sambrook calls this 'real citizen journalism'.

4: Few examples of social media as a factor that affects national and international policies

World Trade Organization (WTO):

In 1999, protestors in Seattle, created a response to WTO meeting being held there. These activists understood the only way they could get into the corporate media was by blocking the roads. Then they realized that 60 seconds of coverage would show them being removed by the police, but without any context to explain why they were protesting. They knew they had to create an alternative media model. Since then, the social media campaign for a cause experienced exponential growth and journalism "by the people" began to flourish, enabled by emerging internet and networking technologies, such as weblogs, chat, rooms, message boards, wikis and mobile computing.

Arab Spring:

Citizen journalism played a role in the uprisings of the Arab Spring. A study of women cyber-activists in several Arab countries found that "a significant proportion of cyber activism revolves around influencing the mainstream media agenda, as an increasingly symbiotic relationship between citizen and professional journalism has developed throughout the Arab Spring."

Demise of Hosni Mubarak:

A computer engineer named Wael Ghonim, engineered protests via his Facebook page, kick-starting the demise of decades-long regime of usurper Hosni Mubarak. He called for people through his page to protest against the dictator. The protest turned out to be too spirited to be controlled by Mubarak and caused his downfall. The TIMES magazine placed Ghonim at the top of its 100 most influential people of the year.



Osama Bin Laden Attack:

Sohaib Athar (@ReallyVirtual) was the first person to inform the world about the attack on Osama bin Laden on May 2, 2011. He tweeted about the raid in which Osama bin Laden was killed. The IT consultant lives in Abbottabad, the town where bin Laden was found and killed by US forces.

Athar first tweeted about events surrounding the raid: "Helicopter hovering above Abbottabad at 1AM (is a rare event)." He didn't realize that he'd been tweeting about a top-secret attempt to kill an internationally wanted terrorist.

He then tweeted that one of the copters he'd heard had crashed and that the aircraft were not Pakistani. During the raid, Athar speculated that he was two or three kilometers away from the shooting that took place. Once news broke that bin Laden had been killed in Abbottabad, Athar tweeted, "Uh oh, now I'm the guy who live blogged the Osama raid without knowing it."

He further reported that traffic was shut down in some areas, and the army had cordoned off the helicopter crash site. Yet, he remained humble. "I am JUST a tweeter, awake at the time of the crash. Not many twitter users in Abbottabad, these guys are more into facebook. That's all."

Shahzeb

Khan's

case:

Twenty-year-old Shahzeb Khan, from Karachi, was allegedly shot dead by two boys from feudal families on December 25, 2012. Police were reluctant to register a case.. The people took this injustice to micro blogging site Twitter, and expressed their discontent against the system that shelters big fish and tramples the less powerful. The tweeples demanded the Chief Justice of Pakistan take suo moto action against the killers.

Raising voice through the social media, the protesters refused to give up. Their stated goal was to keep protesting through the social media until the news media and the relevant authorities took notice. They all were successful. The protest movement got viral and soon the news media had to play up the issue. The CJP responded by summoning the Inspector General of Sindh Police and ordered the authorities to arrest the killers within 24 hours and seize their family assets.

ENDS