From a journalism education perspective

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Abstract

This paper discusses how journalism education addresses the information/communication needs of island nations in the South Pacific region. It provides with an overview of the communication situation in these nations, identifies the information needs they have and how/if they are addressed by the existing journalism and communication higher education programs. Vast distances, scattered populations, diverse traditions, ethnic conflicts, persisting colonial influences, poor economies and unstable political regimes, lack of infrastructure, fragmented and insignificant market places for both goods and ideas, are some of the reasons why most of the Melanesian, Polynesian and Micronesian microstates have been underdeveloped and also left out of the main communication developments. Taking into account these countries’ distinctiveness, one needs to ask what purpose Higher Education specializations such as journalism and communication serve and how they can best contribute to the development of these countries. Examining the position of journalism education within HE in PNG, Fiji and the other south pacific countries, we get a better understanding of the priority these countries give to address their communication needs. The paper takes as case studies two major journalism and communication programs in the region, the Communication Arts Department at Divine Word University and the Journalism Program at the University of South Pacific. They are approached through curriculum analysis by looking at their different components (media literacy, general education, academic and vocational nature), and their appropriateness for these societies needs and institutional and external support through foreign aid (discussing the practical and ideological influences that have shaped their construction). The paper concludes with identifying the common issues regarding journalism education in the region and suggesting mechanisms of addressing them.

Keywords: journalism education, South Pacific, curriculum analysis

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Notable Pacific Island journalist, Jale Moala, highlights one of the more serious implications of the live news format as we experienced here in Fiji. Writing in “The Pacific Journalist, A Practical Guide, he notes how a particular radio station allowed supporters of the coup leader to make inflammatory statements live on radio, first to try to legitimize the events that had taken place, and later to call for supporters to move into the parliamentary complex and create a human barricade around the hostages, and the hostage takers. It is in the context of the Fiji Islands current post conflict reconstruction stage that I base my reflections, because for us, as well as countries and territories which continue to suffer from the impacts of internal and external conflicts, the mass media together with the new keywords = "South Pacific Islands, communication, Papua New Guinea, Tonga, Solomon Islands, Tuvalu, media, island studies, journalism, media education, community media, development, conflict, Fiji", author = “Usha Harris and Evangelia Papoutsaki”, year = “2008”, language = “English”, isbn = “9789814136082”, publisher = “Asian Media Information and Communication Centre; University of the South Pacific” The value of such a publication lies in the comparison it enables between different regions and countries at different levels of development. The work of the contributing authors provide glimpses of the prevalent issues and perspectives without necessarily providing a definitive picture of this diverse region. A new United Nations survey of South Pacific island nations highlights the necessity of easing mobility for climate refugees—and the importance of calling them refugees in the first place. Major powers make a major concession on their stated climate targets. Given the money and the science, that concession remains largely rhetorical. News in Brief. Scenes From a Mainly Peaceful Protest in Paris. When the government said they couldn’t march, activists covered the Place de la République with shoes—and an estimated 10,000 people gathered to form a human chain. Subscribe. About.