

Philippine Press Institute (PPI)
2020 CIVIC JOURNALISM COMMUNITY PRESS AWARDS
(September 2021)

FINALISTS

CATEGORY	FINALISTS	
	DAILY	WEEKLY
BEST IN REPORTING ON MIGRATION ISSUES	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • <i>No Finalist (Luzon)</i> • <i>Daily Guardian (Visayas)</i> • <i>No Finalist (Mindanao)</i> 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • <i>Luzonwide News Correspondent (Luzon)</i> • <i>Southern Leyte Times (Visayas)</i> • <i>No Finalist (Mindanao)</i>
BEST IN PHOTOJOURNALISM	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • <i>SunStar Pampanga (Luzon)</i> • <i>The Freeman (Visayas)</i> • <i>Edge Davao (Mindanao)</i> 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • <i>Herald Express (Luzon)</i> • <i>Metro Post (Visayas)</i> • <i>No Finalist (Mindanao)</i>
BEST IN ENVIRONMENTAL REPORTING	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • <i>SunStar Pampanga (Luzon)</i> • <i>Leyte Samar Daily Express (Visayas)</i> • <i>No Finalist (Mindanao)</i> 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • <i>Baguio Chronicle (Luzon)</i> • <i>Southern Leyte Times (Visayas)</i> • <i>No Finalist (Mindanao)</i>
BEST IN BUSINESS AND ECONOMIC REPORTING	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • <i>SunStar Pampanga (Luzon)</i> • <i>SunStar Cebu (Visayas)</i> • <i>SunStar Davao (Mindanao)</i> 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • <i>Herald Express (Luzon)</i> • <i>Bohol Chronicle (Visayas)</i> • <i>No Finalist (Mindanao)</i>
BEST EDITORIAL PAGE	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • <i>SunStar Pampanga (Luzon)</i> • <i>The Freeman (Visayas)</i> • <i>SunStar Davao (Mindanao)</i> 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • <i>Palawan News (Luzon)</i> • <i>Metro Post (Visayas)</i> • <i>No Finalist (Mindanao)</i>
BEST EDITED COMMUNITY NEWSPAPER	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • <i>SunStar Pampanga (Luzon)</i> • <i>SunStar Cebu (Visayas)</i> • <i>SunStar Davao (Mindanao)</i> 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • <i>The Northern Forum (Luzon)</i> • <i>Metro Post (Visayas)</i> • <i>No Finalist (Mindanao)</i>

WRITE-UPS ON THE FINALISTS

BEST IN REPORTING ON MIGRATION ISSUES

No Finalist (Luzon – Daily)

Upon careful review of submitted samples, the evaluator finds that coverage of the participating newspaper for Daily Migration Reporting (Luzon) was not significant and there were very few commentaries or follow-up stories on migration issues. As such, the evaluator regrets to inform the awards organizers that there is no finalist for the category on Best in Reporting on Migration Issues (Daily) for Luzon.

DAILY GUARDIAN (Visayas – Daily)

Even with its limited stories focusing on the issues on migration, the **Daily Guardian** highlighted the struggles of people in transferring from one community to another. Among the daily papers in the Visayan region, this paper had the best stories on migration because they also focused on the stories of the overseas Filipinos. Aside from that, this paper also reported on the struggles and hardships of people from the Visayas who were stranded in other areas in the country. Particularly, it reported the hardships of locally stranded individuals (LSIs) and their journey in coming to their hometowns.

No Finalist (Mindanao – Daily)

The committee regrets to inform the awards organizers that no finalists were chosen for this category in the daily division. The participating daily newspapers did not meet some or all of the technical, content and ethical criteria, and did not carry significant reporting or even commentary on migration issues.

LUZONWIDE NEWS CORRESPONDENT (Luzon – Weekly)

Luzonwide News Correspondent has highly contributed to awareness of issues concerning migrant workers through its news reports of overseas Filipinos sent home that have been affected by lay-offs in the past year. A dedicated opinion column on overseas Filipinos provided an avenue to discuss migrant workers' rights as well as provided space featuring stories of successful migrant workers and how their hard work has led to the upliftment of their lives and that of their families and the community.

SOUTHERN LEYTE TIMES (Visayas – Weekly)

Although it had limited published stories on migration, the **Southern Leyte Times** provided space for special features that discussed the issues on migration. It discussed stories on the plights and struggle of locales in moving from one area to another during the pandemic.

No Finalist (Mindanao – Weekly)

The committee regrets to inform the awards organizers that no finalists were chosen for this category in the weekly division. The participating weekly newspapers, namely Davao Catholic Herald and Mindanao Observer, did not meet some or all of the technical, content and ethical criteria. Both of the participating newspapers did not carry significant reporting or even commentary on migration issues.

BEST IN PHOTOJOURNALISM

SUNSTAR PAMPANGA (Luzon – Daily)

Consistent use of photographs in the front and back pages with strong content, composition, and communicative qualities across all 107 issues covering national, local and community issues. Inside sections are also mostly accompanied by content-rich photographs and there are stand-alone news and feature images with captions within journalism standards.

THE FREEMAN (Visayas – Daily)

This paper had invested in its photos. It manifested in its world-class photos that captured emotions and the essence of each story. The articles published in this paper also had its personal photos attached. The pictures were also strong enough that they could tell stories by themselves. Freeman also had high-quality and utilized different angles of photography, such as aerial photography.

EDGE DAVAO (Mindanao – Daily)

Edge Davao stood out this year by improving its photo reportage amid the pandemic – capturing images of masked, quarantined ordinary people trying to go about their daily lives and earn a living while navigating the maze of quarantine regulations. Notable were its photographs of empty Davao City streets during the strict lockdown and heavy traffic when the lockdowns were eased, a woman doing “tuob,” market vendors, kids catching fish, and people going to cemeteries well ahead of All Souls Day because of government restrictions.

HERALD EXPRESS (Luzon – Weekly)

The majority of the issues of the **Herald Express** contain strong banner photos and powerfully composed pictures in the inside and back pages. The images cover wide-ranging national and local topics and themes. News captions provide control and context of the images.

METRO POST (Visayas – Weekly)

The **Metro Post** had good photos for its stories. The photos followed the rules of photojournalism, as well as captioning. This paper also had photo covers on its issues, which helped the readers to appreciate the stories written in the paper.

No Finalist (Mindanao – Weekly)

The committee regrets to inform the awards organizers that no finalists were chosen for this category in the weekly division. The participating weekly newspapers, namely Davao Catholic Herald and Mindanao Observer, did not meet some or all of the technical, content and ethical criteria, including contrast, sharpness and composition.

BEST IN ENVIRONMENTAL REPORTING

SUNSTAR PAMPANGA (Luzon – Daily)

SunStar Pampanga's coverage of community-oriented environmental issues are extensive, giving voices to various stakeholders—government, non-governmental organizations, lobby and policy advocacy groups, corporate and the general citizenry. Sustainable utilization and protection of natural resources and the impact of wide-ranging environmental issues and concerns across various ecosystems and call to action are presented in the well-written and edited articles.

LEYTE-SAMAR DAILY EXPRESS (Visayas – Daily)

Although it was relatively small and had limited operations, **Leyte Samar Daily Express** maximized its capacity as a community paper to report about the local environmental issues. The paper focused on highly-contested issues such as mining and illegal logging. More importantly, the paper also wrote follow-up reports on these topics regularly. **Leyte Samar Daily Express** also had feature stories focusing on the environment.

No Finalist (Mindanao – Daily)

The committee regrets to inform the awards organizers that no finalists were chosen for this category in the daily division. The participating daily newspapers did not meet some or all of the technical, content and ethical criteria. There was no significant environmental reporting (beyond spot news) and not enough staff-written content to merit a recommendation.

BAGUIO CHRONICLE (Luzon – Weekly)

For its extensive coverage of community-oriented environmental issues. The **Baguio Chronicle** gave voices to multiple stakeholders— government, non-governmental organizations, lobby and policy advocacy groups, corporate and the general citizenry in the well-written and well-edited news, features, dedicated sections and columns. Amplified call to action for the sustainable utilization and protection of natural resources and implementation of environmental laws and codes and the advocated solutions to avert the impact of wide-ranging environmental issues and concerns—natural and man-made disasters, air and water pollution, soil and forest cover degradation, plastic pollution, solid waste crisis, global warming and climate crisis and emergency, etc. are reported with varying degrees of depth and intensity. The **Baguio Chronicle** has Green/Health section that assures wide coverage of issues, environmental stories in banners and a full two-page year-ender “Environmental Hits” that summarized 2020.

SOUTHERN LEYTE TIMES (Visayas – Weekly)

Although it had a few environmental stories, the reports published by the **Southern Leyte Times** focused on local environmental issues. Particularly, the stories magnified the issues of mining.

No Finalist (Mindanao – Weekly)

The committee regrets to inform the awards organizers that no finalists were chosen for this category in the weekly division. The participating weekly newspapers, namely Davao Catholic Herald and Mindanao Observer, did not meet some or all of the technical, content and ethical criteria. Both of the participating newspapers did not carry significant environmental reporting.

BEST IN BUSINESS AND ECONOMIC REPORTING

SUNSTAR PAMPANGA (Luzon – Daily)

SunStar Pampanga seems to have allocated space to business and economics news in the past year, aside from incorporating industry projections as well as press releases from government agencies and corporate organizations, among others. The evaluator notes that features stories were also published to promote awareness in financial literacy programs, financial consumer protection, as well as the shift to digitalization of transactions in the country, that has an impact to varied target audiences. There were also special features on thriving business ventures despite the pandemic as well as accomplishments of traders here and abroad.

SUNSTAR CEBU (Visayas – Daily)

This paper did not just report about business and economics in general, but also provided space for local and small business owners. **SunStar Cebu** featured local micro, small, and medium sized businesses everyday. The business page focused on food business, and also provided space for arts and crafts. Aside from artistic business, the paper also featured local restaurants and local fashion designers, which helped to boost their sales and reach among the people in their area.

SUNSTAR DAVAO Davao (Mindanao – Daily)

Despite obvious constraints in resources, **SunStar Davao** did not abandon business and economic reportage at a time of recession. It gave readers its own take on the decline in GDP, the rise in joblessness and inflation, and the stability of the Mindanao power situation, while documenting the major impacts of the pandemic and the ensuing lockdowns on businesses particularly the tourism and restaurant sectors, as well as the Kadayawan festival. On a positive note, **SunStar Davao** featured the rise of online sellers, the achievements of Davaoeños in business (ex., the Dabawenya who became head of a digital bank), the benefits of satellite technology on agriculture, the promise of VCO, and many others.

HERALD EXPRESS (Luzon – Weekly)

Herald Express' provision of a devoted page for business and economic news signals a deliberate intent to provide in-depth focus on critical issues that brings about a positive impact on the community and the local economy.

BOHOL CHRONICLE (Visayas – Weekly)

The **Bohol Chronicle** wrote community-based stories focusing on the local business and enterprises. Its stories focused on local tourism, as well as local business, which helped to highlight the plight of small-time business owners. The stories published under **Bohol Chronicle's** business page were very helpful for business people.

No Finalist (Mindanao – Weekly)

The committee regrets to inform the awards organizers that no finalists were chosen for this category in the weekly division. The participating weekly newspapers, namely Davao Catholic Herald and Mindanao Observer, did not meet some or all of the technical, content and ethical criteria. The former had no business content while the latter depended on national news services like Philstar.com, Inquirer.net, and others.

BEST EDITORIAL PAGE

SUNSTAR PAMPANGA (Luzon – Daily)

When the opinion/editorial page opens, attractive vector arts or cartoon accompany the editorial. **SunStar Pampanga** is able to show diversity, as it showcases varied opinion from writers of different backgrounds and interests. The views presented in **SunStar Pampanga's** pages convey the writers' opinion and analysis on issues that matter to the province and its people. The editors provide analysis that can help solve a particular issue that has an impact on the community. The paper is careful that its editorial is not used as a platform by government officials and personalities for their personal gain.

THE FREEMAN (Visayas – Daily)

The **Freeman** has the most consistent editorial page among the papers. It had editorial articles in all of its issues every day. Its editorial pieces were in-depth and provided much-needed information about local and national issues. Their opinion articles also provided suggestions and feedback that were helpful and practical. Most importantly, its editorial pieces highlighted the importance of a strong stance on the COVID-19 issues, which helped the readers understand the pandemic situation.

SUNSTAR DAVAO (Mindanao – Daily)

SunStar Davao used its editorial page to perform a vital function amid the pandemic: educating the public about Covid-19 and the measures needed to contain it: lockdowns, physical distancing, wearing masks and shields, and combating misinformation and disinformation. It did not shy away from offering constructive criticism despite the tendency of those in-charge of pandemic response to disdain it, writing about the need to fine-tune Davao City Hall's EO 53 and the system of FM passes, vaccination procurement, corruption in PhilHealth, and ensuring the protection of human rights. **SunStar Davao's** editorials were generally lengthier, better written, better researched, and better argued than its competitors. Its opinion writers represent different viewpoints and reflect the sentiment of the community.

PALAWAN NEWS (Luzon – Weekly)

The newspaper opens to a one-page Editorial with two or three additional areas for varied topics. Ushering the opinion is a vector art (cartoon) that is related to the topic of the opinion. The editorial is readily seen because it is highlighted. The lines in the layout are clear, and they delineate the different opinion boxes from each other. Of all the community newspapers, the **Palawan News** presented the best views or opinion on the current issues in their province. The editorial underscored the importance or impact of a national issue on Palawan. The opinion/s were well-researched, impeccably written, concise, clear, and direct to the point. Most times, the writer was brave to call out leaders, politicians, or personalities about good governance or the lack of it, without sacrificing moral or ethical standards.

METRO POST (Visayas – Weekly)

This paper focused on providing important and contextual information on its editorial pieces. More importantly, Metro Post also provided follow-up pieces on important issues published in its editorial page. **Metro Post** also highlighted the importance of expressing the views and critical stance on important issues.

No Finalist (Mindanao – Weekly)

The committee regrets to inform the awards organizers that no finalists were chosen for this category in the weekly division. The participating weekly newspapers, namely Davao Catholic Herald and Mindanao Observer, did not meet some or all of the technical, content and ethical criteria. One of the participating newspapers carried very short editorials with little to no research, although moral purpose was evident. There was also very little variety in content. The other did not carry editorials at all.

BEST EDITED COMMUNITY NEWSPAPER

SUNSTAR PAMPANGA (Luzon – Daily)

From any distance, **SunStar Pampanga's** crisp-colored front page, together with its clean lay-out, easily entices one's attention. The masthead is clear and its logo name is visible. The top half of the first page serves a directional function, as it tells what articles the reader can find on the inside pages. Adding to the ease of reading is the large font with which the headlines are written. The colored headline pictures and line advertisements on the front page likewise draw attention. **SunStar Pampanga** gives the readers a sense of affinity to their hometown. The headlines and the news focus on the province. Headlines are framed in a positive manner or in a way that lifts up the province or its people. Leafing through its pages, the articles are clearly divided by labels ("topstory", "technews", "world", "entertainment", "nation", "health", among others) written in bold, appealing, and distinct fonts. Another unique and meaningful element in **SunStar Pampanga** is the 5-page "Perspective" which features teachers to speak their minds and share their perspectives on issues that matter to them. **SunStar Pampanga** is a comprehensive newspaper offering a broad range of stories and interests, diverse views on important issues, and community public service.

SUNSTAR CEBU (Visayas – Daily)

This Cebu-based paper had a distinction of being the paper that excelled in most categories. Overall, the paper has an excellent quality from its layout, design, and content. **SunStar Cebu** had the best photos among the papers. Its photojournalists are highly-skilled, which manifested in the high-quality photographs. The photos were world-class. Its editorial page was also progressive and highlighted the importance of a strong stance on local issues. Overall, the stories observed proper grammar. **SunStar Cebu** also offered a wide-array of topics that were complete and useful for the communities.

SUNSTAR DAVAO (Mindanao – Daily)

SunStar Davao did an outstanding job of covering the biggest story of the year, the Covid-19 pandemic, going above and beyond what has become the routine reporting of official actions and statistics by coming out with stories that resonate more with readers – stories about them. Its front pages featured stories of survivors, the plight of Covid-19 frontliners in the city including schoolteachers fundraising for supplies, the travails of parents and students amid online and modular learning, and the pandemic's mental health impact. Despite space and resource constraints, **SunStar Davao** continued to publish special or explanatory reports on topics like rampant sexual abuse and prostitution amid community lockdowns, the pros and cons of homeschooling, telemedicine, the push for digital government services, slow internet services. Its balanced, multiple-sourced coverage of local stories set it apart from its competitors. Examples include the Samal-Davao bridge issue, the overreach of local quarantine regulations, and lockdown violations. The use of infographics and good layout and design allowed the paper to better educate readers about pandemic measures and treatments, as well as the need to wear masks and shields to prevent virus transmission.

THE NORTHERN FORUM (Luzon – Weekly)

The front page of **The Northern Forum** is a crowd drawer. Its logo, masthead, and social media information are visible. Both the headline font and the headline photographs are big, in full color, and strategically placed which instantly elicit the readers' attention. The colored printing of the line advertisements on the front page, the back page, and the pictures of features and advertisements in the inside pages is also worthy of attention. Content wise, the **Northern Forum** understands clearly that it is a community newspaper. Its headline focuses on issues which the region faces and not on politicians or personalities: a display of high integrity and positive moral standards. Throughout the paper, majority of its news and features are about the region and its provinces. The inclusion of pictures inside, as well as the variety of

interests in their articles and features, including a unique Teacher’s Corner in some of its issues, adds to The Northern Forum’s appeal.

METRO POST (Visayas – Weekly)

The **Metro Post** had a clean layout all throughout its papers. The design followed an order that made it clean and easy to read. One of the strengths of this paper was its content, which mainly focused on community-based stories. The reports highlighted the struggles and plights of the people in their area. The editorial page also focused on local issues and had a strong stance on these topics.

No Finalist (Mindanao – Weekly)

The committee regrets to inform the awards organizers that no finalists were chosen for this category in the weekly division. The participating weekly newspapers, namely Davao Catholic Herald and Mindanao Observer, did not meet some or all of the technical, content and ethical criteria. One of the participating newspapers, while catering to a specific sector, needed to exert more effort to reflect varied voices. The other depended on national news services and government press releases and had few staff-written content, and also needed to exert more effort to show a record of editorial independence. Both needed to shore up editorial standards and consistency in news coverage.

***Compiled by the Awards Secretariat
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