

Philippine Press Institute (PPI)
2021 CIVIC JOURNALISM COMMUNITY PRESS AWARDS
(September 16, 2022)

FINALISTS

CATEGORY	FINALISTS	
	DAILY	WEEKLY
BEST IN REPORTING ON MIGRATION ISSUES	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• SunStar Pampanga (Luzon)• <i>No Finalist</i> (Visayas)• Mindanao Times (Mindanao) https://issuu.com/mindanaotimes/docs	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Baguio Chronicle (Luzon)• <i>No Finalist</i> (Visayas)• <i>No Finalist</i> (Mindanao)
BEST IN PHOTOJOURNALISM	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• SunStar Pampanga (Luzon)• SunStar Cebu (Visayas)• Mindanao Times (Mindanao) https://issuu.com/mindanaotimes/docs	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Herald Express (Luzon)• Metro Post (Visayas)• <i>No Finalist</i> (Mindanao)
BEST IN ENVIRONMENTAL REPORTING	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• SunStar Pampanga (Luzon)• <i>No Finalist</i> (Visayas)• Mindanao Times (Mindanao) https://issuu.com/mindanaotimes/docs	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Palawan News (Luzon)• <i>No Finalist</i> (Visayas)• Mindanao Observer (Mindanao)
BEST IN BUSINESS AND ECONOMIC REPORTING	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• SunStar Pampanga (Luzon)• SunStar Cebu (Visayas)• Mindanao Times (Mindanao) https://issuu.com/mindanaotimes/docs	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Herald Express (Luzon)• <i>No Finalist</i> (Visayas)• Mindanao Observer (Mindanao)
BEST EDITORIAL PAGE	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• SunStar Pampanga (Luzon)• SunStar Cebu (Visayas)• Mindanao Times (Mindanao) https://issuu.com/mindanaotimes/docs	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Baguio Chronicle (Luzon)• Bohol Chronicle (Visayas)• <i>No Finalist</i> (Mindanao)
BEST EDITED COMMUNITY NEWSPAPER	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• SunStar Pampanga (Luzon)• SunStar Cebu (Visayas)• <i>No Finalist</i> (Mindanao)	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Baguio Chronicle (Luzon)• Bohol Chronicle (Visayas)• <i>No Finalist</i> (Mindanao)

WRITE-UPS ON THE FINALISTS

BEST IN REPORTING ON MIGRATION ISSUES

SUNSTAR PAMPANGA (Luzon – Daily)

Compared to Baguio Chronicle, Sunstar Pampanga has more stories focusing on life abroad and Filipino working overseas. They highlight the struggles of the “modern day heroes” and include updates that are helpful to their families which they have left behind.

***NO FINALIST* (Visayas – 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 the technical, content and ethical criteria, and did not carry significant reporting or even commentary on migration issues.

MINDANAO TIMES (Mindanao – Daily)

<https://issuu.com/mindanaotimes/docs>

In the light of what civic journalism is, the publication's treatment and reporting of both local and international migration discusses pertinent issues that express the community's sentiment. The existence of a community section, as well as, including reports about migration in lifestyle sections and in what is categorized as "More news" section, ensures regularity and frequency of migration reporting. A number of the notable news and feature articles include the complete abolition of the Kafala scheme (a sponsorship system that monitors and restricts migrant laborers' movement), highlighting periods of stay and employment of OFWs in countries like Korea, reports on concerns of Filipinos abroad like the release of kidnapped Filipinos in the Gulf of Guinea/involvement of a Filipina in Tunisia blast, the attack on Filams in the US, local community personalities that give back to the community, the plight of lumads, displaced families (due to "rido") in Maguindanao returning home, and special features on IP communities and their integration to society. In addition, the writing done on these topics are done with care, striving for objectivity and proper representation.

BAGUIO CHRONICLE (Luzon – Weekly)

For reporting about the plight of overseas workers, Baguio Chronicle deserves commendation, although its stories on a particular topic are not that numerous compared to other issues.

***NO FINALIST* (Visayas – 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, did not meet all the technical, content, and ethical criteria. The participating newspapers did not carry significant reporting or even commentary on migration issues.

NO FINALIST (Mindanao – Weekly)

The Mindanao Observer's consistently observes ethical standards in their coverage on local migration issues and migrants, being particular with variety, sensitivity, and making sure that these perspectives cause no harm on the migrants and their families. The quality of writing is above par in terms of writing in a clear and organized manner that is also engaging and easy to understand. However, The Mindanao Observer lacks regularity and frequency in reporting on local migrant issues and migrants. In one year, the paper reported only less than 20 articles centering on local migration and migrants. **It is primarily for this reason that the screener does not recommend that The Mindanao Observer be a finalist this year.**

BEST IN PHOTOJOURNALISM

SUNSTAR PAMPANGA (Luzon – Daily)

For the daily category, Sunstar Pampanga is quite commendable for its attempt to incorporate photos in its publications. The photos included were enhanced by good captions, which allow readers to better understand the context of each photograph. However, the paper is not consistent in publishing its own photos. Most of the time, photographs were from stringers or were sourced.

SUNSTAR CEBU (Visayas – Daily)

SunStar Cebu deserves a commendation for its consistently appealing photojournalism gracing its pages. The newspaper excels at delivering human interest photos that are current pieces of journalism in themselves. A case in point is when it used a top shot of a row of couples tying the knot at a local church. While a news report on this would probably be limiting, using a photo to tell the story works more. Another excellent example of photojournalism from the newspaper includes a sweeping shot of an abandoned and unfinished Mactan Bridge, part of the Cebu-Cordova Link Expressway. Photographs used to illustrate stories are likewise brilliantly composed, such as the photos of night-time fishing boats blanketed in darkness, with the only light sources plunged into the water to illuminate their nets and catch. The captions to photographs are concise and describe accurately what is happening in the photo.

MINDANAO TIMES (Mindanao – Daily)

<https://issuu.com/mindanaotimes/docs>

Variety of topics and themes represented in the images specially with the banner photos-- with strong content, powerfully-composed, and communicative qualities across all 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. The captions are within industry standards of news caption writing.

HERALD EXPRESS (Luzon – Weekly)

Herald Express is simply the best among Luzon participants for the photojournalism category. The technicalities of good photography were evident in the photos it had published on its papers. The level of mastery is commendable because it obviously provided a deeper treatment for its photos. Aside from these, the pictures came with good captions. The paper is also consistent in putting good photos for its issues.

METRO POST (Visayas – Weekly)

Out of all the weekly newspapers examined, only Metro Post contained consistent original photojournalistic content. Their photographs capture action clearly and are technically good on a black and white page. The photographs illustrate stories well and the captions are descriptive of the photos. Photographs that appear on the newspaper include a good balance of newsworthy content (mostly depicting politicians), and locally relevant human-interest photos, either used to illustrate a news article or acting as a standalone piece of journalism.

NO FINALIST (Mindanao – Weekly)

Many photographs that were used in the Mindanao Observer are of bad quality in terms of composition and design that are below industry standards and the look as printed needs to be addressed. Perhaps the quality of the printing press cannot keep with the photographs. Lacks photographic representation of the news specially community issues. Many photographs are not properly captioned.

BEST IN ENVIRONMENTAL REPORTING

SUNSTAR PAMPANGA (Luzon – Daily)

For its regional section, Sunstar Pampanga mainly focused on reporting about environmental concerns. By doing this, it provided an avenue for environmental issues to be highlighted.

NO FINALIST (Visayas – 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 most of the technical, content, and ethical criteria. There was no significant environmental reporting, except for a photo essay from SunStar Cebu.

MINDANAO TIMES (Mindanao – Daily)

<https://issuu.com/mindanaotimes/docs>

The coverage of Mindanao Times 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.

Various topics involve: heritage trees, bamboo for prevention of calamities and flooding, plastic wastes and plastic chemicals, tarsier conservation, sero-waste management, urban gardening, earthquakes, Marikina river, urban wetlands, carbon forest, tree planting in Marawi, eagle hunting, ecotourism guiding training, environmental groups call for clearing of waterways, e-coli bacteria in water systems, shark habitat study in Palawan, campaigns against poison rain, mangrove plantations, stranded whales, online sale of medical devices with mercury, water solutions innovations, lead paint poisoning, climate crisis and climate action related to COP 26, landslides in Agusan, open pit mining issues in South Cotabato, CBCP on ecology and integrity of creation.

PALAWAN NEWS (Luzon – Weekly)

Being based in the country's "last frontier," Palawan News has lived up to helping preserve the environment by raising awareness about natural resources through its stories. They thoroughly focused on environmental issues concerning the province, while highlighting the programs and interventions being done by concerned authorities. Aside from regular publication stories, the newspaper is commendable for its follow-up stories, which enable the narratives to continue. Primarily, Palawan News focused on reporting about illegal mining and illegal fishing which are among the biggest concerns of this province nowadays.

NO FINALIST (Visayas – Weekly)

The committee regrets to inform the awards organizers that no finalists were chosen for this category in the weekly division. Despite the Bohol Chronicle and the Negros Chronicle publishing environmental stories, it was few and far between to merit recognition for this award. While there would be spot news in some issues, their treatment and their sourcing were far too shallow to warrant attention. The participating newspaper did not meet most of the technical, content, and ethical criteria.

MINDANAO OBSERVER (Mindanao – Weekly)

There is notable extent of coverage of community-oriented environmental issues giving voices to various stakeholders—government, non-governmental organizations, lobby and policy advocacy groups, corporate and the general citizenry.

ISSUES COVERAGE: air pollution, hazards of firecrackers, earthquake, women and climate change, environmental users fees to tourism areas, red tide toxins, on the term lumad and environmental defenders, flood aftermath, plastic pollution, mining related issues, earth day issues, river clean-ups, pan tree, hospital and medical waste, landslides, water system projects, South Korea waste in Surigao del Sur landfill (long form), greenhouse and hydroponics, pandemic medical waste, signature campaign for open pit mining ban in South Cotabato, bamboo resources for climate change mitigation, local climate change action plan, environmental program and ecotourism in Agusan del Norte, open pit mining policies, plastic recycling programs, typhoon Odette impact, destruction and community actions.

BEST IN BUSINESS AND ECONOMIC REPORTING

SUNSTAR PAMPANGA (Luzon – Daily)

SunStar Pampanga is commendable for its regular release of news stories about business and economics. Its stories did not just focus on macroenterprises and economics, but also highlighted the importance of understanding local businesses.

SUNSTAR CEBU (Visayas – Daily)

SunStar Cebu finished on top of the daily newspapers in terms of business and economic reporting because of their regular business news offering, well-edited articles, and insightful and representative coverage of the local business scene. The newspaper endeavors to produce original reporting for their business pages, although they rely on third-party news articles as well. Their range of business and economic reporting covers outlooks for different economic sectors in the industry, down to small local businesses and trends and issues they have to weather. For in-depth coverage, the newspaper takes time to expound on the different sides of the issue and consult with a number of sources to tell a comprehensive story. At the other end of the spectrum, the newspaper also features local businesses and highlights the issues that affect them.

MINDANAO TIMES (Mindanao – Daily)

<https://issuu.com/mindanaotimes/docs>

The screeners recommend that the Mindanao Times be a finalist in the category for Best in Business and Economic Reporting -- The coverage of Mindanao Times in business and economics strives to present relevant information and issues that directly affect the community the publication represents. From reports/features on current statistics relating to business and investments, projecting growth targets, pushing for Halal production, discussing Islamic banking, featuring the global trend of sustainable investments, providing assistance to local MSMEs, highlighting ordinances to bolster innovation, or writing an article on revival family-owned Moro banana plantation, the Mindanao Times represents various demographic groups. One observation to stress, though, is that there are some concerns with heading formats, as well as some minor concerns in punctuation.

HERALD EXPRESS (Luzon – Weekly)

For the business and economic reporting category, Herald Express provided an avenue for local businesses and enterprises to be highlighted in its papers. It also promoted medium, small, and micro enterprises – and their coping strategies amid business challenges – which is essential in civic reporting.

NO FINALIST (Visayas – Weekly)

The Visayas Screening Committee recommends that no finalist be proclaimed in this category. This year, all the weekly newspapers that asked for consideration in this competition did not have dedicated business news sections, and reporting on businesses and the local economy were non-existent most of the time. In other times, the newspapers chose to reproduce press releases on business events. To be fair, the newspapers identified the news releases as such. However, the

dearth of consistent business coverage on weekly newspapers is regrettable, given the part that the economy of the Visayas plays in the Philippines.

MINDANAO OBSERVER (Mindanao – Weekly)

It is recommended that The Mindanao Observer be a finalist in this year's Civic Journalism Awards primarily because the publication includes contextualized articles/reports on business and economics news, features, and follow up stories in each weekly issue. In reviewing each published issue, we see how economic/business issues, opportunities, and trends unfold or progress over time. The community/region is central. Although the screener is not abreast with Chavacano, the articles in English reflect good technical writing.

BEST EDITORIAL PAGE

SUNSTAR PAMPANGA (Luzon – Daily)

Sunstar Pampanga, in their papers, presented different topics that are good for discussion in the editorial section. They provided clear positions that must have helped readers understand substantial issues and in effect, keep abreast their development. On the other hand, it was quite noticeable that their production of editorial pieces is not regular and inconsistent. They also seldom show and/or include editorial cartoons.

SUNSTAR CEBU (Visayas – Daily)

The editorial page of SunStar Cebu deserves the accolade for best editorial page this year given the overall quality of its editorial writing and cartoons, as well as the diversity and balance of its opinion columnists. SunStar Cebu's editorials gave a consistent contextual analysis of the state of the pandemic in the city and the province. Editorial pieces also gave clear-headed and reasonable criticism of the pronouncements of government officials and even church leaders ("Drop by UP, Mr. Secretary"; "Communicating as one"). Sunday essays, which are by-lined, offer refreshing reads on lighter topics that provide a much-needed break from the heavy content of regular editorials.

MINDANAO TIMES (Mindanao – Daily)

<https://issuu.com/mindanaotimes/docs>

The Mindanao Times opinion columns cover a wide range of topics from social, economics, politics, education, Mindanao culture, law, environment, and other conceivable issues in various logical viewpoints highly relevant to its audience. Undoubtedly, their columnists bring their wealth of experience and extensive knowledge to their articles without going too technical. Columns are extensive, in-depth, well-written, and easy to understand. The cartoons are visually impactful, and their conveyed meanings are potent, despite some repeats/reruns at times. Concerns from readers (e.g., Letter to the Editor: SSS "rectifies" Rough Cuts, Jan. 16-17, 2021) are also adequately addressed (Rough Cuts: The SSS is reaching to us, Jan. 19). The use of vernacular language (Nunot sa Alisngaw sa Kape) is a breath of fresh air from the usual English language used in the paper.

BAGUIO CHRONICLE (Luzon – Weekly)

In the editorial category, Baguio Chronicles stood out among the rest. Aside from its substantive discussions in its editorial content, the newspaper is also commendable for its good writing. Its editorial pieces use human interest, which allow its readers to relate to the issues that concern them. The paper also discusses current issues about their locality that should be magnified. Among the notable topics presented in its section is the #BreatheBaguio, a brand created by the local government unit, which promotes Baguio as a highly preferable place for tourists.

BOHOL CHRONICLE (Visayas – Weekly)

The Bohol Chronicle stands out among Visayas weeklies for the breadth and depth of its opinionmakers, who tackle a variety of topics – national and local politics, sports, history, technology, religion, culture, and others. The paper's editorials are lengthier and well-researched, and offer sound arguments in its criticism of government policies ("Need to evolve IATF role in pandemic"; "Good pandemic governance vs 'epalism'") and political leaders ("The image of the capitol in tatters"; "Don't raise your voice, improve your argument"). The Bohol Chronicle can thus be considered a significant voice of the community and region.

NO FINALIST (Mindanao – Weekly)

The editorial page is nonexistent in Mindanao Observer; hence, the paper cannot be nominated for the said category.

BEST EDITED COMMUNITY NEWSPAPER

SUNSTAR PAMPANGA (Luzon – Daily)

Unlike other newspapers, Sunstar Pampanga has allotted more pages for its opinion section or page. This provided a good opportunity for their experts to talk about various issues and concerns and also to provide their stand on them. In terms of layouting, the paper followed the basic principles of design and has a commendable taste in terms of putting together all the necessary elements. It still follows its signature colors and fonts, which provide a chance for its readers to continue enjoying the paper's traditional design.

SUNSTAR CEBU (Visayas – Daily)

SunStar Cebu deserves the accolade for best edited daily community paper this year given the quality and wider scope of its news coverage, whether local or national; the diversity of its story selection; critical but responsible coverage; attractive page design, layout, and photography; and tighter editing and headline-writing. SunStar Cebu also delivered consistent coverage of the pandemic and the government's response, as well as local politics.

NO FINALIST (Mindanao – Daily)

While Mindanao Times is consistent in its extensive coverage of stories context-specific to Mindanao, it has minimal straight news stories written by its staff. In every issue, stories from MindaNews, Philippine News Agency (PNA), and the Philippine Information Agency (PIA) fill the pages (aside from publicity materials). Such stories have, of course, been vetted and edited by its

editorial board. Hence, Mindanao Times only needs to lay out the stories in its paper. The limited straight news articles written by its staff are more of an FYI (Ws & H) type. I have not seen What's In It For Me (WIIFM) or Civic Journalism principles applied, which could have emphasized the importance of the FYIs to the lives of Mindanaoans (where applicable). Despite the highly visual front page that indeed hooks its readers, lapses in editing were observed at the paper's main story subheads several times. Though their weekend issues are well-crafted, tastefully laid out, and carefully edited, they are feature stories that mostly do not delve on the WIIFM aspect

BAGUIO CHRONICLE (Luzon – Weekly)

Newspaper Baguio Chronicles, overall, is really a strong paper. The placement of sections in its corresponding pages is well thought out, and highlights the importance of its stories. The font style and colors are well put together and the paper follows basic principles of design as well. Overall, its layout and design enables a better reading experience for its audience and media consumers.

BOHOL CHRONICLE (Visayas – Weekly)

The Bohol Chronicle has the genuine feel of a community paper – one that embodies the culture, character, and soul of the people it serves. This was even more apparent amid the paper's coverage of the pandemic, in which it relentlessly reported and analyzed case statistics and policy. Despite the pandemic dominating the news, the paper continued to be a responsible watchdog on government affairs. For instance, the paper highlighted stories about capitol transactions on its front page. While it was critical of political leaders, it gave them fair play by publishing their statements or reactions with the same front-page prominence. The paper also showed some variety in content, with its mix of news on politics and business, and other topics. Nonetheless the paper can still improve with a more modular layout, better photo selection, and tighter editing.

NO FINALIST (Mindanao – Weekly)

While Mindanao Observer news stories cover a wide array of topics, the articles are sourced from PNA, MindaNews, gov't agencies' publicity materials, various CIOs, Philstar.com, and PRO9. Photos are also from PNA, various gov't agencies, or contributed photos. This means that editing work, if there is any, is quite limited as all the paper has to do its page layout. While page layout is consistently balanced and adheres to practical layout principles, assessing its writing and editing quality is difficult given the context of the above (1st bullet). The screener have difficulty connecting the paper's editorial platform, "The small paper with a big mission," and its "55 years of principled journalism" to its reportage/coverage. Despite the paper's effective use of art cards (Riceponsibleako. Plant trees) as fillers, the paper's soul is lacking since it's devoid of an editorial page

***Compiled by the Awards Secretariat
Asian Institute of Journalism and Communication
September 16, 2022***