

Philippine Press Institute [PPI]
2022 CIVIC JOURNALISM COMMUNITY PRESS AWARDS

THE FINALISTS

BEST IN REPORTING ON MIGRATION ISSUES

SunStar Cebu (Visayas – Daily)

SunStar Cebu published excellent reporting on the displacement of communities and its impact on the people and the environment. Its stories spotlighted issues such as humane living conditions, relocation sites, and even clean water. These kinds of stories provided nuance and context for their readership especially since the local government was forcing them to abandon their living spaces at such a precarious time. SunStar Cebu angled their stories pointedly, as their stories took the local government to explain and account for its actions. Without stories that spotlight local voices and concerns, which SunStar Cebu executed masterfully, these types of stories would fall short of highlighting migration issues in the local context.

SunStar Davao (Mindanao – Daily)

SunStar Davao exhibited impressive technical skills and commitment to ethical standards. Its technical skills highlighted the ability to write in a high-quality, engaging, and clear manner. It could improve in terms of providing content by enhancing its coverage of migration issues. It observed professional and ethical standards in its reporting. The newspaper avoided sensationalism, stereotyping, generalizations, and underreporting while striving for transparency and independent truth-seeking.

Baguio Chronicle (Luzon – Weekly)

Baguio Chronicle focused more on international migration – with stories on the plight of the Overseas Filipino Workers (OFWs). But the paper also provided stories that touched on the gender-aspect of living and overseas migration. The paper also published stories on various struggles of Filipinos abroad, such as discrimination and low wages. Baguio Chronicle provided a face for these overseas workers and their real life experiences. The reporting was also compliant to the principles of gender and sensitivity. The stories presented not only facts, but also real experiences of these “new heroes.” They were written in a way that would elicit empathy with the OFWs’ struggles. The reporting was also balanced, providing various sides of its stories on migration, such as the authorities, civil society organizations, and the actual people experiencing the struggles on migration. Through Baguio Chronicle’s contextual and factual reporting on migration, it enabled its readers to understand the localities – and even foreign countries – through the lens of the migrants and other stakeholders involved in its stories.

Mindanao Observer (Mindanao – Weekly)

The Mindanao Observer showed good technical skills in terms of writing in a clear, engaging, and high-quality manner. For content, it could improve coverage of migration issues by producing more reports and localizing them. Its reports upheld professional and ethical standards.

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BEST IN PHOTOJOURNALISM

SunStar Pampanga (Luzon – Daily)

SunStar Pampanga is commendable in terms of technicalities of photography and photojournalism. It used photos that captured the exact moment or emotions the text stories required. The photos and the text stories complemented each other in a flattering manner. The photographs followed the principles of photography, and often told a story. Most of the photos used are owned by SunStar Pampanga itself. The photos were also meticulously and strategically placed across the paper. In terms of captioning, the corresponding texts that described the photos used in the paper were concise. The caption did not just mimic the thoughts presented in the photo, but rather provided deeper context in each photograph.

SunStar Cebu (Visayas – Daily)

SunStar Cebu placed a significant premium to highlighting great photojournalism. The newspaper strove to attract readers with beautiful front page photographs that, at times, occupied most of the front page. The photos that the newspaper used in its pages illustrated stories well, and from a unique perspective at times. Their photographers were also able to capture great stories and tell them succinctly in the captions. One standout example is the photo titled *Dance interrupted*, which featured a dance practice for the Sinulog Festival that was brought to an abrupt halt when one of the dancers learned that the competition they were entering was cancelled due to a newly announced COVID lockdown. Another photo, titled *Not alone*, showed homelessness in the city through a poignant shot of a person sleeping in the arms of a statue of Ronald McDonald sitting outside a McDonald's restaurant. These photos, while telling great stories in themselves, stood out because of the great print quality of SunStar.

SunStar Davao (Mindanao – Daily)

The photos and captions published by Sunstar Davao were succinct in style, which made it really easy to understand, even with only the photo. The storytelling and caption creation were also comprehensive in that they were intended to clarify and add details about which most people would ideally read and like. The materials mostly depicted the everyday life of many Filipinos, which are relatable and interesting to read about.

Mabuhay (Luzon – Weekly)

In all of its front pages, Mabuhay used eye-catching photos that complemented the news reports. The photos were compelling, hooking the readers to read the stories presented in the paper. On the technical side, Mabuhay's photographers are well-skilled because of the quality of the photos they have taken. Captions were also concise and straightforward. The paper meticulously selected photos that best represented and portrayed its selected stories. The colors of the photos taken were mesmerizing and told stories on their own. Most importantly, the photos provided an avenue for the readers to take a peek at the community's affairs, cultures, and even traditions. The photos effectively presented what was really

happening in the community. The photojournalism of this paper is commendable because it was able to mirror the realities on the ground, while providing deeper context to the experiences of the community.

MetroPost (Visayas – Weekly)

MetroPost was the only weekly among entrants in the Visayas region that consistently published original photographs. The original photographs published in the weekly newspaper covered mostly shots of news events and photos showing human interest. Especially for the human interest photos, these were beautifully composed and looked good on a black-and-white page, in which MetroPost publishes. The captions that went with the photos also described the scenes well. Aside from those that accompanied stories, MetroPost also routinely published standalone works of photojournalism.

The Mindanao Cross (Mindanao – Weekly)

The photos and captions published by Mindanao Cross were of high quality. Technically, the photos were in good shape - professionally and artistically. The subjects in the photos were inclusive, promoting the everyday journey of normal people, in normal environments, while some were innovative in style.

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BEST IN ENVIRONMENTAL REPORTING

SunStar Cebu (Visayas – Daily)

Sunstar Cebu exemplified high quality journalism in covering local environmental issues. It published special reports, highlighting marginalized voices, and conducted follow-ups on issues that warranted focus. A good example is the two-part investigation on floating cottages in Mactan Island in Cebu, published in September 2022. The stories uncovered how an absence of regulations and policy could worsen environmental hazards and public health. A series of follow-ups on the local government’s plan on harnessing waste-to-energy spotlighted why the move merited scrutiny, especially since these projects end up producing harmful emissions. Without critical reports like these, the local government would not move to enact policy changes. Such follow-up stories, brimming with context and nuance, which SunStar Cebu published regularly, spotlighted issues within the community that warranted attention and scrutiny.

SunStar Davao (Mindanao – Daily)

The stories and news published by Sunstar Davao in the Environmental Category were diverse and extensive, while most were community-oriented. Reports were varied, tackling environmental issues such as those not being discussed in everyday life. They were also an eye-opener, especially for people interested in the environmental state of Mindanao today. The stories featured and promoted interaction with community members through easy-to-understand content and materials. Moreover, the news and stories discussed sustainable reports that affect everyone, especially vulnerable groups in the community.

Luzonwide News Correspondent (Luzon – Weekly)

Luzonwide News Correspondent is a paper that is focused on the environment. It has a dedicated section for environment stories. In the sample issues this paper had submitted for screening, at least two-thirds had environment stories. It did not only report about the environment in general, but also wrote stories and issues about the local environment affecting the community. Not only did it provide knowledge and information about the existence of the problem, but it also gave specific and concrete ways to mitigate and reverse the effect of such environmental concerns. The reporting not only relied on facts about environmental issues, but also focused on calling to action and involving the community in addressing the problem. The newspaper also had a consistent coverage of local environmental concerns.

Eastern Visayas Mail (Visayas – Weekly)

The Eastern Visayas Mail published well-produced feature stories that underscored marginalized voices in the community. The weekly paper executed this skillfully by giving column inches on what people on the ground felt, what they understood to be the ramifications of simple policy decisions, and how communities would benefit as a result of that same action. The editors of the weekly took time to develop these stories, as nuance and context stood out. These stories, while wanting in frequency, still warrant recognition for spotlighting environmental issues.

Mindanao Observer (Mindanao – Weekly)

The stories and news published by Mindanao Observer in the Environmental Category were diverse and extensive, while most were community-oriented. The reports found a way to make people think beyond a scope people have considered before. The stories featured and promoted interaction with community members, tourists, local and national leaders, and readers through visual and readable content that is easy to understand and digest. Moreover, the news and stories discussed issues that affect everyone, especially vulnerable groups in the community.

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BEST IN BUSINESS AND ECONOMIC REPORTING

SunStar Cebu (Visayas – Daily)

SunStar Cebu stood out as having the most consistent coverage of business and economic issues. While the newspaper had a regularly published business section, it bumped business and economic news reports to the front page if they were significant for the region. SunStar Cebu regularly ran front-page stories reporting on mainly economic issues and how the region was affected. Examples include the inflation crisis that gripped much of the country, rising fuel prices due to the war in Ukraine, fare hikes, and wage hikes. SunStar Cebu also reported on business and economic issues from the perspective not just of government or business, but also of other sectors and ordinary people, like what it did when covering inflation. The newspaper also looked out for opportunities for enterprise reporting, such as by covering economic and labor forums and contextualizing reports on these for the local audience.

SunStar Davao (Mindanao – Daily)

SunStar Davao demonstrated excellence in technical quality, content coverage, and ethics, making it a reliable source of information on both local and international business and economic issues. The writing quality of its reports was engaging, clear, and accessible, making complex economic issues easier to understand for readers. It covered a wide variety of original and community-oriented topics related to the economy, providing readers with a comprehensive overview of the local business climate. The publication observed ethical and professional standards for the print media, avoiding sensationalism, adhering to accuracy and accountability, and respecting privacy and dignity in reporting.

Lucena Herald (Luzon – Weekly)

Lucena Herald focused on community-based stories, highlighting the need to empower local business and fuel local economies. Its stories focused on helping small businesses. For example, the paper provided concrete and specific steps on meat processing, thus providing livelihood for the community. Lucena Herald's reporting on business and economics focused on improving the lives of the localities by providing stories that give them information and concrete guidance on how to do local livelihood and businesses successfully. Aside from the local government's side, business and economic stories also provided an avenue for civil society organizations to share their projects and thoughts that could help the local community. In terms of reporting and writing, Lucena Herald did not use overly complex or highfalutin business terms, thereby allowing readers to appreciate the content more and apply them to their personal lives. The paper also regularly covered important issues and events essential to local businesses and the local economy.

Mindanao Observer (Mindanao – Weekly)

The Mindanao Observer's coverage of business and economic issues was extensive and community-oriented, which means that it prioritized reporting on topics that directly affect the local readership. This kind of reporting can have a significant impact on a community's understanding of important issues and can help readers make informed decisions about their own lives. Its writing was well-researched and easy to understand, particularly for readers who use the local language. This suggests that it can reach a wide audience. It also upheld ethical and professional standards, reporting in a fair and balanced way.

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BEST EDITORIAL PAGE

SunStar Pampanga (Luzon – Daily)

SunStar Pampanga had a dedicated page for its editorial and opinion pieces. Aside from national takes, it also focused on local issues and discussed them using the editorial section. It focused on a wide array of issues that concern the locals, but more on the national approach. Though the context of these pieces were more on the Philippine scale, the solutions and facts provided are also helpful to the communities. The editorial and opinion pieces of SunStar had strong and straightforward takes on various issues, but remained grounded on facts. The titles of the pieces were also clear and concise, making it easier for the readers to be enticed with the pieces. SunStar used a dynamic approach in its editorial titles: some were in question type, while some were declarative, but immediately followed by hard facts. The paper also had editorial cartoons to support the arguments being raised in the editorial pieces.

The Freeman (Visayas – Daily)

Apart from maintaining the standards of opinion journalism, The Freeman exhibited the characteristics of a good editorial page – strong and insightful editorials, a rotating and diverse set of regular columnists, and a space for the readers to share their views or give feedback. A sampling of the Freeman’s editorials indicated the wide range of topics that the paper’s Editorial Board was able to articulate to its community – national and local politics, business and the economy, public service, and others. It was critical but at the same time constructive of the presidency, national government agencies and important institutions like the Church. Contributors or columnists included women, clergy, veteran newsmen, lawyers, business leaders, and others.

SunStar Davao (Mindanao – Daily)

SunStar Davao as a community newspaper delivered comprehensive and inclusive journalism in its editorial pages. Its editorials conveyed messages with balance in the analysis of evidence and events while crusading in its thrusts. The pieces were diverse in topics. They were of various contexts such as social, political, environmental, religious, technological, rights, and even press freedom (which is highly commendable). The community newspaper was wise with regard to layout, style, reasoning, purpose, and power to influence public opinion.

Baguio Chronicle (Luzon – Weekly)

Aside from the eye-catching and witty titles, Baguio Chronicle provided editorial pieces that were timely and focused on the vital issues, catering to specific context and time. Even with its fearless stand on issues, the paper remained ethical and its opinions were based on facts. The paper also made use of a somewhat personal approach – the editorial writers provided human experiences that made the stories more compelling, relatable and realistic. Although there was a subjective touch, the pieces remained grounded in facts and guided by the principles of fairness, accuracy, and balance. The pieces provided a school of thought that helps the readers decide, especially on more pressing issues in their locality. Beyond opinion,

the pieces also gave clear guidance to the readers, without stepping on personal boundaries. Baguio Chronicle followed an organized way of presenting ideas in its editorials: laying down and enumerating substantive information about the topic followed by complementary opinions.

MetroPost (Visayas – Weekly)

The MetroPost had the most consistent and diverse set of opinion-makers among weeklies in the Visayas region and thus embodied the community spirit. Columnists included women, seniors, youth, and professionals. The opinion section also had space for members of the community and published important statements from socio-civic organizations, a practice worth emulating by other community papers. MetroPost's editorials were readable and easy to digest and tackled various topics such as politics, health, road safety, and public utilities. The editorials went straight to the point and were not unnecessarily long.

The Mindanao Cross (Mindanao – Weekly)

The Mindanao Cross had diverse coverage of themes, such as national and local politics, social issues, environment, values and spirituality. It showcased cartoons which were reflective of the subject presented in the editorial text. These cartoons were creatively done. Its editorial writing was strong in terms of catchy introductory paragraphs, presentation of solid background, development of coherent viewpoints, and compelling concluding paragraphs.

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BEST EDITED COMMUNITY NEWSPAPER

SunStar Pampanga (Luzon – Daily)

SunStar Pampanga, although the sole nominee for daily papers in Luzon, proved its consistency in all aspects – reporting, writing, technical aspect of presenting stories, and layouting, among others. This paper was consistent in reporting issues concerning its localities – in this case, Luzon. It had different sections like regions, nation, editorial page, lifestyle, etc., which provided avenues for local stories to be magnified. Although the paper also catered to national stories, community reporting was its priority. In terms of grammar and writing, SunStar Pampanga used appropriate and easy to understand words. On the layout, this paper used well-coordinated colors and consistent design styles.

Daily Guardian (Visayas – Daily)

Iloilo’s Daily Guardian stood out for the quality and consistency of its original reportage and the priority it gave to gut issues – or issues of real importance to the community rather than the hackneyed “he said, she said” coverage of city hall or the provincial capitol. A good example is the Ungka flyover issue, which it pursued relentlessly given the safety issues it posed to daily city commuters. The Guardian’s detailed coverage of stories like the SIM card registration rollout and inflation and consumer affairs issues could give the Manila dailies a run for their money. The Guardian also gave a balanced coverage of the 2022 elections and made it a point to relate local politics to national and vice versa. Moreover, the Guardian maintained a look and design as well as a classic layout that made it distinguishable, whether online or in print.

SunStar Davao (Mindanao – Daily)

SunStar Davao showed the importance of quality content, wide range of topics, and organized layout. From the front page and all throughout the various sections, SunStar Davao demonstrated that layout is more than just a design, that it is also a form of visual communication. The pages didn’t look congested. The color palette went well together and served its purpose well -- pointing the readers in the right direction. SunStar Davao used the same font for each of its different text groupings: main text, titles, subtitles, and headings -- which is commendable as it helped in the layout alignment, thereby making the paper spic and span.

Baguio Chronicle (Luzon – Weekly)

Baguio Chronicle, across categories, provided in-depth and factual reports. Most notably, the paper devoted space for fact-checking articles. It provided impactful reports on politics, environment, and regions or local news. The regions section provided opportunities for the locals to be well-aware of the important events and developments happening in their respective areas. In addition, the reports were also contextualized for the understanding of the local community. In general, the stories uplifted the livelihood, culture, customs, and traditions of the areas covered by Baguio Chronicle. It also highlighted some national issues, but framed them locally for the local’s understanding. The tone of reporting is commendable. The angle and framing of news were highly based on facts and often highlighted the community. In terms of the layout, the paper had an organized and well-thought out design that allowed its readers to easily navigate through the pages.

MetroPost (Visayas – Weekly)

The MetroPost stood out among weekly newspapers in the Visayas with its overall quality – story selection for the front page and inside pages, quality of headlines and stories, and quality of its photos and captions. MetroPost was able to publish original and independent reporting of local, regional, and national stories, across topics of general interest such as politics, business, consumer issues, health, crime. News and updates also included Campus News and “Vox Populi,” which gave community members their own space in the paper.

The Mindanao Cross (Mindanao – Weekly)

The Mindanao Cross covered a wide range of topics including politics, economics, society, culture, morals, health, environment, and spirituality. It exhibited mastery of the language in terms of writing and editing. It showed its strength in its editorials and editorial cartooning. Its photos were timely, relevant, expressive and interesting. Its page layout was logically, efficiently, and aesthetically organized.

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