

EVENT CONTRIBUTION

Konrad-Adenauer-Stiftung e.V.

REGIONAL OFFICE
GULF STATES

March 23, 2014

PETER SENDROWICZ
DR. GIDON WINDECKER

www.kas.de/rpg

Tis early practice only makes the master: becoming a journalist means taking responsibility

WORKSHOP ON INVESTIGATIVE JOURNALISM AND E-PUBLISHING FOR YOUNG OMANI JOURNALISTS

Exploring in depth, uncovering irregularities, bringing deficiencies to the light – investigative journalism plays an essential role in the public debate. Media thereby build the bridge between society and politics. To make young Omani journalism students from the Sultan Qaboos University (SQU) familiar with critical questioning and examining was the aim of the six-day workshop which took place in Muscat, March 13-18, 2014.

Anne Allmeling, correspondent in the ARD radio broadcasting studio in Rabat, and Turki Al Balushi, founder of Al Balad, Oman's first online newspaper, introduced the method of in-depth background research to the young journalists. Throughout the seminar, the students learned how to outline relevant information in its corresponding context. They also gained an insight into similarities and differences of journalism in Germany and Oman. Furthermore, Turki Al Balushi later extended the workshop by adding the dimension of e-publishing, which is becoming more and more important in the Sultanate.

During the opening ceremony, German Ambassador Hans-Christian Freiherr von Reibnitz and Dr Abdullah Al Kindi, Dean of the College of Art and Social Sciences, pointed out the particular responsibility journalists have in society. Sticking to the guidelines of an ethically well-grounded journalism actually requires a responsible approach to one's rights and at the same time awareness for the duties that come with this particular profession. Thus, the recurrent theme of the workshop was clear: journalists can only contribute to the common good if they exercise their métier in a morally reasonable and justifiable way.

The trainers introduced the theoretical aspects of investigative journalism to the

participants during the first workshop-sessions. They discussed the importance of an in-depth analysis of the state of facts and what makes a story newsworthy. They also spoke about the continuous challenge to prove allegations and statements. The final objective for each student was to present a self-written news article on the basis of the newly acquired techniques. The trainers supported the students while they were searching for relevant topics and interview partners. During the workshop they left the university campus to meet interview partners and to capture relevant background information. The young journalists concentrated on topics concerning local issues, relevant for the inhabitants of Muscat, such as the local housing situation, the maintenance of public hospitals and childcare.

It was particularly satisfying to see the proactive attitude of the young journalists who were keen to present balanced views of the facts and issues they chose. Despite a sudden rainfall, which usually paralyses public life in Muscat, the students worked hard and met as many interview partners as possible. Tis early practice makes the master - this also applies when it comes to embracing journalistic responsibility under difficult conditions.

Konrad-Adenauer-Stiftung e.V.

**REGIONAL OFFICE
GULF STATES**

March 23, 2014

PETER SENDROWICZ
DR. GIDON WINDECKER

www.kas.de/rpg

This is exactly what Hatim Al Taie, founder and executive editor of "Al Roya", had in mind, when he spoke about the passion one needs to become a journalist. The visit of the independent Omani daily newspaper "Al Roya" (in English "Vision") was one of the central workshop activities outside the SQU campus. The young journalists experienced the environment of their desired profession, while Mr Al Taie inspired them with his vision to contribute to strengthening the Omani civil society.

Another highlight outside the campus marked the lecture given by Yaqub Al Harthi, lawyer and expert in media and public law, which was co-organised by the Cultural Club. Mr Al Harthi clearly stated that reforms in the field of journalism can only be claimed, if the journalists themselves have knowledge of the legal situation concerning their profession. Media law mostly specifies the legal framework for the founding procedure of media corporations. Thus, he still sees potential in the definition of the rights and duties for professional journalists. All in all, the students learned the necessity of knowing the legal framework of their future profession and to get involved with its further development.

After six instructive and prolific days, the young journalism students shared their experiences and impressions from the workshop. Particularly, the field trip for the interviews beyond the SQU campus was an outstanding experience. The students were seemingly surprised by their own efficiency in such a short amount of time - this will generate a great motivation for future projects according to their own disclosures. Furthermore, female students remarked that they feel encouraged after the visit of "Al Roya", after they saw so many women working in the editorial office. Another student said that he had learned not to be immediately satisfied with the answers of

his interview partners, but to dig deeper and listen more closely.

This seminar was the third cooperation between the KAS Regional Office Gulf States and the SQU in the field of media and civil society. Dr Al Kindi declared that the journalism workshop stands for the fruitful and trustful cooperation between both institutions.