



At the second **Deutsche Welle Global Media Forum** in Bonn in June over 1,200 delegates from the media, politics, business, science and culture joined Deutsche Welle partners and NGOs to discuss media behaviour in situations of volatility and conflict. DW Director General **Erik Bettermann** summed up the media's key roles: to act as responsible professionals while honouring journalistic impartiality, and to contribute to conflict prevention and containment. Here are some conference highlights and feedback



Every blogger is a type of modern-day Tiananmen Square

"Every blogger is a modern-day Tiananmen Square," said the Chinese blogger **Yang Hengjun** during the DW Global Media Forum. "The Chinese authorities have continued to increase internet censorship over the last few years – even with the support of Western companies." Nearly 300m Chinese use the Internet. For the young, educated urban class it's a door to the outside world. Citizen journalists and democracy movements use the Internet as a fast communication system. Reports, pictures and videos of political events are disseminated around the world in seconds. A globally available alternative to state media is emerging. The political establishment in Beijing replies with cyber police, Internet censorship and network blockades.



The BOBs

"This prize comes at the right time for our campaign," said **Nazli Farokhi** from Iran. Her blog, "4equality", has existed for around four years now and has been blocked by authorities time and again. "The BOBs award has given us a boost." The winner of the Reporters without Borders Award attended the awards ceremony for The BOBs – DW's international weblog awards during the DW Global Media Forum. Farokhi's blog accompanies a campaign in Iran fighting for women's rights and an end to discrimination. The winners **Yoani Sánchez** from Cuba as well as **Liu Xiaoyuan** and **Zeng Jinyan** from China were not able to make the trip to Germany as authorities in Havana and Beijing apparently rejected their request to attend the event. Last year, Internet users from around the world suggested more than 8,500 blogs for the Deutsche Welle Weblog Awards in 11 languages. An international jury made up of journalists, media scientists and bloggers chose the winners from those suggestions.



Affected women feel abused and showcased

Founder of *medica mondiale* **Monika Hauser** called for the media to be responsible in its interaction with the survivors of sexual violence during wartime. She said the media reports far too often "in a way that makes the affected women feel once again abused and showcased as an object that is attractive to the media as well as insensitively confronted with media curiosity." At the DW Global Media Forum, Hauser, who won the Right Livelihood Award (also known as the Alternative Nobel Prize) in 2008 for her commitment to survivors of sexual violence during wartime, reported on the situation of affected girls and women in Liberia and the Eastern part of the Democratic Republic of Congo.



Censorship in Zimbabwe

Even in countries where there is strict media censorship, there are ways to spread news and information. In Zimbabwe, the online community Kubatana (www.kubatana.net) is doing just that, said **Brenda Burrell**, Kubatana Technical Director. Their project is called Freedom Fone. She told the conference in Bonn how they are using mobile phones to make a difference.



Feedback: Abubakar Jijiwa

The Director General of the Voice of Nigeria was enthusiastic about the diversity of the event, both in its content and the people attending. He expressed concern, however, about the wide gap in technological development. "Some countries are galloping ahead while others are limping behind. More needs to be done to progress development for the poorest of the poor."



Feedback: Isabelle Abric

Isabelle has helped develop national news broadcasting strategies on United Nations peacekeeping mission in many countries. Here at the DW Global Media Forum she was overwhelmed by the amount of interesting issues being addressed. "It was very informative, almost too dense. But I learned something in every event I attended – about new tools to reach people, innovative ideas, people doing similar things in other parts of the world, or insightful cultural aspects."



Feedback: Marc Hecker

Marc Hecker from the Institut Francais des Relations Internationales in Paris said the DW Global Media Forum is a refreshing change from the many meetings with strategists and military experts he's accustomed to. "It's exciting to meet young bloggers from all around the world. You can feel the Web changing things, it's not just another means of communication. New media are bringing us to a new quality threshold. The Internet is not only a social tool, but also facilitating funding, recruiting and the exchange of tactics and techniques. You can feel that here."

Feedback: Hai Ahm Abdul

The freelance consultant for Bangladesh NGOs Network for Radio and Communication found the Global Media Forum a "great place for people to tell stories from their various countries. Inside our societies there are hindrances and pressure from governments that do not allow open expression. Here the countries of the world can find ways to facilitate reconciliation at home. That brings peace and understanding, which removes conflict. We have to ensure freedom of the press, freedom of expression, to present the true picture of what is happening in our homelands."

Feedback: Rose Athumani

Rose is a journalist with the Daily News in Tanzania. She found the conference "very impressive" and learned a lot about mass media and new media and how they are "impacting journalists in both positive and negative ways. There are no checks for new media, which is dangerous. If we can better merge them together it will only help our efforts to bring good information to the public."

Is the world on the verge of civic participation?

Howard Rheingold from Stanford University, one of the most important trailblazers in Web 2.0 and author of several bestsellers covering the effects of the Internet on society, opened the DW Global Media Forum. A renowned social scientist and founder of several online communities, he coined the term "smart mobs" which describes networks that help their members communicate more efficiently with each other by using the Internet. "Something that was never thought possible with this magnitude, regardless of location and at a phenomenal speed," said Rheingold. Whether it is students protesting in Taiwan and Chile, civil unrest in France or demonstrations in the Philippines, Rheingold believes that new technologies change the way in which people get together, organize things and exchange information. The 62-year-old Internet guru from California posed the question: "Is the world on the verge of a new form of activism and civic participation?" In his opinion, "smart mobs" have also left their mark on politics: "The demonstrations that decided the elections in Korea and Spain were organized via text message."

