



## **In Search of A Story That Can Make A Difference**

### **THE VISAYAS EXAMINER'S EXPERIMENT WITH PUBLIC JOURNALISM**

*The Visayas Examiner (TVE) was born in March 1999 as an alternative newspaper. Through the years it strove to be a credible source of information that deeply respects the divergent voices in the community and supports advocacies like the environment, women, children, and good governance.*

As part of its continuing skills building program, the TVE has been sending its staff members to seminars and workshops on investigative reporting, reporting on women and children, and public journalism. The workshop series on public journalism was initiated by the then Evelio B. Javier Foundation and later the Center for Community Journalism and Development (CCJD)>

In July 2001, TVE reported on the hazards posed by a hospital incinerator. While straight reportage is sometimes enough to bring out information, the newspaper felt people needed a kind of journalism that educates and encourages people to do something about certain issues or events that have an effect on their lives. The staff decided they could do this by having TVE's readers meet in a dialogue with Dr. Jorge Immanuel, an expert on hazards posed by incinerators. The forum, entitled "The Burning Question: Why Incineration Is Not the Solution," was the first TVE experiment with public journalism.

Public journalism is a kind of journalism that increases public discussion, encourages citizens to think more clearly about issues, strengthens a sense in leaders and citizens alike that they could solve local problems, helps build a society that educates itself, and strengthens democracy. Its aim is not simply to persuade the public that a problem exists, rather it engages the public in a search for solutions.

In September to November 2002 TVE together with the CCJD, experimented with a public journalism page. Today, it is set to widen its public journalism experiment by redesigning the whole newspaper and making sure that each story is written with goal of enriching civic life. The ongoing experiment holds a wealth of possibilities because it is re-imagining a journalism that is critical but also gives hope and lifts readers and journalists alike.

TVE's experiment with public journalism hopes to raise the standards of the craft. It strives to share the vision of citizens and communities and works hard to earn the trust of the readers it has vowed to serve. TVE adheres to a belief that no journalistic vision will ever be complete without a vision of the community as a better place in which to live.

It is for this same reason that TVE would like to be known not only as the community paper of credibility, commitment, competence and choice but also as a medium that contributes to the building of better communities.