

# Demystifying Journalism.

An Insight into the world of journalism from the unique experience of a seasoned professional.

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Journalism often stands at the crossroads in the dissemination of information, with the power to inform, shape public perception, and influence the less knowledgeable with vital information. With the current fast-paced media landscape, where information is abundant and the line distinguishing fact and fiction blurs, the role of journalists has never been more critical.

But what does it truly mean to be a journalist in the digital age? How does one navigate the challenges of reporting the truth in a world saturated with 'fake' news? We have sat with Axel Bugge, a former Reuters bureau chief, that has covered 'everything from attempted coups to modern-day slavery, Amazon deforestation, wildfires, politics and the tech sector in Latin America and Europe' (spimun.confrence\_Instagram\_2025), to break down the craft and challenges of the profession of journalism.

## A journalist in the digital age.

Veronica: With the emergence of social media, would you say that news reporting has gotten easier or harder?

Mr. Bugge: It's gotten harder, and it's much harder. It's gotten far worse, and I think there is a failure to differentiate between so-called citizen journalism and proper professional journalism. I think that the world no longer pays attention to the importance of actual professional journalism, people who are trained, people who went to school and I think that's a misfortune.

Veronica: Do you believe media coverage influences international intervention or influences international convention of policies?

Mr. Bugge: I believe that in the past it may have done so. I mean from the way that the world is going now with press coverage of international events, of disasters like the mistreatment of women in Afghanistan for example, those can lead to interventions, those can lead to actions, but governments need to listen and want to do something about the issue.

## Navigating the challenges of reporting the truth.

Veronica: Have you faced any risks or an ethical dilemma while reporting global issues for stories?

Mr. Bugge: Yes, but there are not too many, I think if you are just looking for news technically you know what news is. I have faced in the past where I go and report on stories and I receive information that is not good enough to warrant a story, so I have faced pressure to write the story anyway by authorities.

Veronica: Would you say that it is good practice in a sense? To push stories even with or with a lack of limited information.

Mr. Bugge: No, that is a terrible idea. For authorities, I mean, this was someone high up in a government that will not be named.

## Axel Bugge and his experience of being a Journalist.

Veronica: Have you ever encountered any journalism or any activism that significantly impacted issues or causes, like women rights in Afghanistan for example.

Mr. Bugge: I met ...well, there's a story I covered in Brazil, about indigenous rights and I remember very clearly there was a woman, a lady priest who had fought, or was fighting for indigenous rights. She lived in the Amazon and she was killed, and that was pretty special.

Veronica:

What did you do when you were still in Reuters, specifically were there any interactions that were particularly memorable or impactful to you personally.

Mr. Bugge:

I did once talk to António Guterres, actually twice, the first time he was prime minister of Portugal, that was quite memorable. I believe that writing stories about people who kind of feel that they're forgotten is quite impactful, some of the stories in distant and remote places are most often satisfying in that sense.

Veronica: You spoke about training, can you go into a little more detail about what are the standards in Reuters or your experience training for a hostile environment for example?

Mr. Bugge: Hostile environment training lasts a week, straight through, and they show you how to keep the door locked in different ways. For example, from how to lock the doors so

that nobody can come in and attack you and how to deal with flat jackets. They do physical drills where you have to drop and move along the ground, lots of first aid training. There is generally a good sense of staying behind troops for this kind of stuff.

Veronica: You would describe journalism as being an almost dangerous profession, right?

Mr. Bugge: Well, if you just sit in an office and write about the stock market, that's not dangerous, but if you go out then it's dangerous.

In an era dominated by social media, it's easy to get lost in the noise of sensational headlines and viral posts. But, as Axel Bugge reminds us, the essence of journalism lies in responsible reporting and largely written by people with a commitment to discovering the truth.