

MEDIA ETHICS AND THE PROTECTION OF CHILDREN'S RIGHTS IN THE MEDIA IN KOSOVO



Save the Children



GUIDELINES AND CODE OF CONDUCT

This document has been produced as a result of the input derived during a Save the Children training which has been held by the journalist and media consultant David Hayward. The training gathered representatives from the Kosovo Independent Media Commission, NGO media representatives and professors at the Journalism Department of the public University of Prishtina.

The aim of the code of conduct is to create an accessible online guide to responsible involvement of children in the media. It draws on the United Nations Convention on the Rights of the Child (UNCRC), the Kosovo Independent Media Commission code of conduct and the BBC editorial guidelines.



RESPONSIBLE REPORTING OF CHILDREN IN THE MEDIA

It is the duty of the media and journalists in Kosovo to carry out responsible reporting of children and vulnerable young people when they are involved in news stories.



PORTRAYAL OF CHILDREN IN THE MEDIA

The depiction of children in the media can often be misleading. Children are

too often shown in negative stereotypes as;

- Victims of disaster
- Starving children in Africa
- Troublemakers
- Irresponsible teenagers
- Little devils

Children should be portrayed in a way that does not impede their rights; they should be seen as individuals.



GIVING CHILDREN A VOICE

Children have the right to be heard. In news stories, they should be allowed to express their own views and opinions. Their right to participate in the media is central to the UNCRC.



PROTECTION OF THE CHILD AND RIGHT TO PRIVACY

Children have a right to protection and privacy. When involving children in controversial stories, journalists and the media must have their permission and consent of their parents or guardians. Children should not be submitted to exposure of a negative nature in the media without prior agreement. Therefore parents and carers (guardians) should create their strategies to protect them from such content, whilst such programs should be clearly labeled with content and age appropriate warnings.



PROTECTING CHILDREN FROM HARMFUL CONTENT

Children should not be exposed to harmful content on-screen. They must be protected from images that could have a lasting and detrimental impact on them. This includes images of violence and of a sexual nature, explicit pornography and extreme language. Action must be taken to warn children and adults of harmful content and for it to be shown at appropriate times.



ACCESS TO THE MEDIA, INCLUDING DIGITAL AND SOCIAL MEDIA

Children must be allowed access to the media, including digital and social media. The child and media relationship is an entry point to the world of children and their rights to education, freedom of expression, identity, health, dignity and protection. There is an important function of mass media to ensure the child has access to information and material aimed at promoting their social, spiritual and moral well-being.



EDUCATING SOCIETY ABOUT THE RIGHTS OF CHILDREN

The media has an important role to play in protecting and promoting the rights of the child. There is a duty to educate and inform the wider society on the issues affecting children.



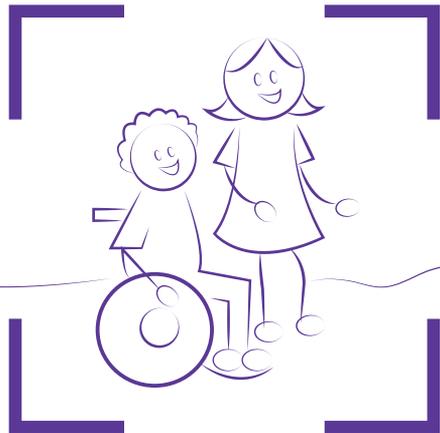
STORYTELLING

An essential element of all of the above points is the need to tell stories in a powerful, engaging and compelling way. For the media and journalists to effectively apply the guide and code of conduct, excellent storytelling must be a central part of every report.

This code of conduct is designed to introduce the media, journalists and anyone involved in the portrayal of children, with a guide to responsible reporting. There is a great deal of further reading and information below. The UNCRC and the Kosovo Independent Media Commission guidelines, offer excellent detail about how to deal with children in the media.

There is first class advice on verification and protection of social and digital media in the verification handbook, and detailed help in reporting on children on the BBC College of Journalism website. All of the materials listed will help journalists and the media cover stories about children and child issues in a far more effective and attractive manner.

“I can choose not to answer; do not push for an answer”



“To interview me, film me or take my photos do not forget to ask for my parents/ carers informed permission - It is my right!”

“Do not talk down to me! Do not forget to inform me when I’m being recorded and what is on and off the record!”

TO GET MORE INFORMATION

United Nations Convention of the Rights of the Child

https://www.savethechildren.org.uk/sites/default/files/docs/Know_Your_Rights_poster_4.pdf

Kosovo Independent Media Commission Guidelines

<http://kpm-ks.org/?faq=271&gjuha=3>

BBC Editorial Guidelines

<http://www.bbc.co.uk/editorialguidelines/page/guidelines-children-introduction/>

Verification Handbook

<http://verificationhandbook.com/>

BBC College of Journalism Reporting on Children

<http://www.bbc.co.uk/academy/journalism/article/art20140428142034522>

Getting the Most from Children in Your Reports

<http://www.bbc.co.uk/academy/journalism/article/art20140522115128283>

Reporting Cases of Abuse

<http://www.bbc.co.uk/academy/journalism/article/art20140610145725989>

As part of Save the Children accountability system: If you have any complaint, feedback or question, kindly share it with us at: scik@savethechildren.org