

Module for  
journalists and media

# “PROTECTION OF CHILDREN IN MASS MEDIA”

## PROJECT:

SOCIAL JUSTICE FOR ROMA,  
ASHKALI AND EGYPTIANS

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This training module is the result of successful cooperation with the Association of Kosovo Journalists (AGK), whom we thank for their cooperation and willingness to make the module on child protection in the mass media part of their curriculum and training plan.

The training module on child protection in the media has been developed by expert Besian Beha, who in addition to compiling the module will also hold training sessions with journalists.

## PURPOSE AND OBJECTIVES OF THE MODULE

The Terre des hommes Lausanne Foundation in Kosovo is implementing the project “Social Justice for Roma, Ashkali and Egyptians in Kosovo”, in partnership with the organization Voice of Roma, Ashkali and Egyptians (VoRAE) and Swiss Church Aid (HEKS/EPER).

The consortium’s overall goal and vision is a multi-ethnic and multi-cultural society in Kosovo, where members of the Roma, Ashkali and Egyptian communities are treated as equals by the state and society, where they have equal access and opportunities like all other citizens, and where Roma, Ashkali and Egyptians recognize their rights and duties.

The specific aim of this module and the training in general is to help journalists and media professionals understand the importance of reporting on ethics and professional standards for children, and to be aware of the impact that media reporting has on the lives and well-being of children. To teach journalists and media professionals best practices for protecting the privacy and preserving the anonymity of children, especially when reporting on more sensitive cases such as those of abuse or violence. Another goal is to help journalists understand the consequences of irresponsible, unprofessional and unethical reporting, and to help them develop a careful and responsible approach to reporting. Help journalists take a balanced approach to representing children, avoiding stereotypes and stigmatization.

At a time when the whole world is engulfed by the explosion of social networks, the responsibility of the media to maintain professionalism, ethical reporting and based on official and confirmed sources is more necessary than ever. When it comes to protecting children’s rights in the media, all these principles and requirements just need to be strengthened.

This training module for journalists and media professionals, related to the protection of children’s rights in the media, has precisely this goal. So, increasing knowledge, advancing professional training and improving the level of reporting among journalists, with a focus on protecting children’s rights.

By conducting discussions, debates, comparisons and practical work, the aim is for journalists, mainly younger ones, and other media professionals to gain a clearer picture of what the real situation is in the media sphere in Kosovo in terms of child protection, and what the next steps should be in improving the current situation. Improving and addressing future challenges, through this module, will be done by offering best practices from local and international organizations, and prestigious media such as the BBC, regarding the protection of children in the media. Through concrete materials, professional and ethical standards, the aim will be to identify current problems and address the challenges faced by the media in reporting and protecting children.

Initially, the module will introduce journalists and media professionals to the legal aspect of protecting children's rights, to continue with local and international legislation, which directly addresses the legal regulation of child protection in the media.

Once participants have clear ideas regarding the legal regulation of children in the media, the module will include a practical presentation of the state of the media in Kosovo, staff, editorial hierarchy, and even journalistic content, aiming to present the real state of the media in Kosovo, related to the challenges that arise in reporting on children.

In addition to media that are registered and function as such, necessary space in the module will also be provided to the 'explosion' of social networks such as TikTok, negative phenomena that can affect children, the sexualization of children, while also providing concrete examples of the consequences that these situations have had for children in Kosovo.

The module will provide space for discussions and concrete cases where the media in Kosovo have violated ethics when reporting on children. Mainly in cases of black chronicle, murders and other crimes, which had received a lot of attention in Kosovo. By presenting these cases, participants will have a clearer idea of the dangers of unethical reporting in the media, as well as highlighting the difference between public interest and public interest. After the discussions, the module aims to provide opportunities for journalists to improvise similar reports, but avoiding media ethical violations.

In a society like this of Kosovo, the media has the main burden of protecting the public interest, avoiding unprofessional reports that can also incite violence and hate speech. So that this does not happen, the module will also include international specifications and principles that are related to the care that journalists should have for identifying children when reporting on different topics.

The media in Kosovo, in addition to the responsibility for accurate and careful reporting when topics are related to children, have a responsibility to be a voice for categories of children who are not heard. The media in Kosovo should report, often but also carefully, about children in poverty, about children from community groups, children with disabilities.

The fine line between the empowerment of these groups and the risk of further discrimination if inappropriate language is used will be addressed in the module on child protection in mass media. Very often, the media, either out of haste or due to journalists not being informed, use inappropriate terminology when it comes to the Roma, Ashkali and Egyptian communities. Each of these communities has different cultures, traditions and characteristics, as a result the use of the term "RAE" with the intention of including all three communities is used incorrectly, and is an offensive term.

In many informative editions, reports of journalists and portals, you can see interviews of children which basically in some cases have readability more than professionalism. Therefore, for this situation, the module will present tips for journalists to interview children as professionally as possible. Advice and recommendations from UNICEF will also be presented, as well as details from the BBC's code of ethics.

The content of the research will also contain the results of studies and research that have been done with journalists and media editors in Kosovo.

## SESSION I :

Session 1 / Topics	Duration	Methodology
1. Legislation for the protection of children in the media		
1.1 Local and international legislation on children's rights	20 min	The main international conventions and laws that regulate children's rights will be presented. Including the UN Convention on the Rights of the Child, the Constitution of Kosovo and the Law on Child Protection.
1.2 Local and international legislation for the protection of children in the media	20 min	Presentation of local and international laws and codes, which strictly define how the media should report on children. Including the IMC Code of Ethics, the KMC, etc.
1.3 Juvenile Justice Code	20 min	The Juvenile Justice Code provides clear obligations related to the confidentiality of procedures when children are involved in various cases.
Discussion: Introductory perceptions of participants about how the media reports on children	30 min	

### Objectives:

- Presentation of the main obligations, conditions and recommendations arising from local and international legislation for the protection of children's rights in general.
- Presentation of all elements arising from the Code of Ethics for Journalists, local and international codes which have strict conditions on how journalists should report topics related to children.

### Expected results:

To familiarize participants with the basic principles of children's rights, including the right to have their voice heard in the media, but in the appropriate form. Developing and advancing knowledge in detail of local and international legislation that provides for ethical and professional rules and principles, which journalists must be mindful of for the protection of children in the media.

# 1. Legislation for the protection of children in the media

Often competing with speed, with the battle for more clicks, media and journalists in some cases exceed local and international Conventions and Laws, which have provided strict regulation of what children's rights are in general. Reading and researching these documents, at a time when there is great technological development, has become something necessary.

Reporting is not just about presenting facts that a journalist has gathered during fieldwork. It also means strengthening and protecting the rights of the most vulnerable categories in society, such as children. This being so, the responsibility for responsible and professional reporting, in addition to protecting the public interest, goes even further by aiming to protect children in a media system that is increasingly facing new challenges.

A recent survey conducted by the organization "Save the Children Kosovo" has revealed that children in Kosovo see Tik Tok as the platform where they are bullied the most. According to this research, 78% of students have stated that bullying is very or moderately present in schools<sup>1</sup>. This bullying, which comes mostly as a result of social networks, has in some cases resulted in physical injuries to children in Kosovo. These statistics have certainly raised the alarm for proper media education, which also increases the obligations of the media in the way they report, taking into account ethical codes.

In order for the media to have clear obligations, there are dozens of international and domestic conventions, codes and laws that journalists must adhere to. Despite this, their implementation in practice has often been challenging. To this end, this session will aim to provide journalists and media professionals with a clear, concrete and general overview of the conditions they must comply with when reporting on children.

## 1.1 Legislation for the protection of children's rights

What is most important at the beginning is to understand correctly and fairly the fundamental rights that children have in every aspect. This includes education, privacy, schooling, entertainment, etc. All of these are defined by local and international legislation, which will be presented in this session.

Internationally, the best known and most important Convention is the UN Convention on the Rights of the Child. The Convention on the Rights of the Child is an international treaty adopted by the United Nations that protects the rights of children and ensures that they are treated with dignity and respect.<sup>2</sup> At the European and international level, there are also other regulations that define in detail the rights of children in every area of life.

In Kosovo, children's rights are regulated by the most important document for a democratic republic, which is the Constitution of Kosovo. Article 50 of the Constitution guarantees the right of children to well-being, independent life and protection from violence.

<sup>3</sup> Meanwhile, a specific law such as the Law on Child Protection defines all the rights guaranteed to children in Kosovo.<sup>4</sup>

## 1.2 Local and international legislation on children's rights in the media

In addition to the basic documents that define the general protection of children's rights, there is clear legislation that also defines the protection of children in the media. Starting from international legislation, but specifically also the legislation in Kosovo.

<sup>1</sup> Report of Save the Children: <https://www.dukagjini.com/save-the-children-tiktok-u-hapesira-ku-bullizohen-me-se-shumti-femijet-ne-kosove/>

<sup>2</sup> Convention on the Rights of the Child - <https://shorturl.at/v80Iz>

<sup>3</sup> of Kosovo - <https://gzk.rks-gov.net/ActDetail.aspx?ActID=3702>

<sup>4</sup> Law on Child Protection - <https://gzk.rks-gov.net/ActDocumentDetail.aspx?ActID=20844>

In order to have a clearer idea of what are the most important laws, codes, and documents that define the criteria for professional reporting and the maintenance of ethics for the protection of children, in this session the legal aspect will be presented, which includes instructions, but also the consequences if journalists do not act according to these documents.

In Kosovo, there are several institutions that are tasked with dealing with the treatment and reporting of journalists when they conflict with professional principles. For audiovisual media, there is the Independent Media Commission. For the print media, there is a self-regulatory institution, the Kosovo Print Media Council. Both of these institutions, in different forms, handle and review complaints from parties against the media. Including those related to children.

In fact, the Law on the IMC initially, with a special article, regulates the Protection of Children and Minors in the Media<sup>5</sup>. Meanwhile, the IMC has recently also drafted a special regulation that addresses only the specifics of media reporting on children<sup>6</sup>.

The Kosovo Press Council Code, in Article 6, also addresses the identification, care and consequences of inappropriate reporting on children.<sup>7</sup> Participants will be informed in detail about all the details, conditions and contents of these regulations during this session.

The session also aims to familiarize participants with some of the international rules, principles of the European Union, which strictly define the conditions and form of reporting for the purpose of protecting children in the media. Some of these documents are: Audiovisual Media Services Directive (European Union), Regulation on the Protection of Children on the Internet, EU Strategy for the Rights of the Child. Framework for the Protection of Children from Harmful Content, Codes of Regulation and Self-Regulation.

In addition to them, EU and international institutions deal with these aspects with other special regulations, but also the media themselves with self-regulatory institutions, aiming at professional reporting and based on criteria.

### 1.3 Juvenile Justice Code

One of the documents that clearly defines the preservation of confidentiality in cases involving children is the Juvenile Justice Code. Seemed at first glance to be a purely legal regulation, the Juvenile Justice Code has been mentioned very often in the Kosovo media. This is related to various cases of black history, where children have also been involved.

According to the Hibrid platform that deals with media monitoring, the most frequent cases when the media in Kosovo use Clickbait are those of black chronicles.<sup>8</sup>

Kosovo media, aiming for speed and click-through news, have reported on many such cases of murder, violence and other criminal acts involving children, revealing identifying information about the children involved, which constitutes a violation of the Juvenile Justice Code.

<sup>5</sup> Law on the Independent Media Commission: <https://gzk.rks-gov.net/ActDetail.aspx?ActID=2809>

<sup>6</sup> IPC Regulation for Child Protection: <https://shorturl.at/9x9FZ>

<sup>7</sup> Code of the Council of Written Media of Kosovo: <https://shorturl.at/XjsMw>

<sup>8</sup> Hybrid report: <https://shorturl.at/TBBPY>



This is precisely the aspect that will be addressed in this session. Participants will be introduced to the clear legal provisions that emerge from the Juvenile Justice Code, part of which also addresses the publicity of proceedings in cases where those involved in criminal offenses are children. The session will aim to provide answers to some of the questions such as: What information is allowed to be published in cases where children are involved in criminal offenses? Who gives permission for any information to be made public? What are the consequences if these provisions are not respected?

Reporting from the Courts and from such cases where violence in one form or another is highlighted, has many dilemmas, starting from providing details to the way journalists should behave in Court or Prosecutor’s Office when reporting on such cases. When it comes to children, the interest in information is even greater, as the hearings are closed. As a result, in many cases journalists aim to obtain information from anonymous sources, which can then be challenging for ethics, and the Juvenile Justice Code.

With these data, it will be aimed to provide participants with a clearer view of the extent to which information can be requested and published for minors, without identifying them. As a result, there will also be a discussion with the participants and exchange of experiences.

## SUMMARY:

At a time when the internet, news, social networks, are at their highest levels of use, when information dominates each platform, knowledge of legal regulation, criteria, consequences and other specifics is of extraordinary importance. This becomes even more valuable when it comes to reporting on a very special category such as children.

Legal regulation is often considered technical, however, familiarity with and consultation of important documents that provide specific reporting requirements for children is valuable and should be done continuously.

### SESSION II:

Session II - Topics	Duration	Methodology
2. Basic principles in media reporting on children		
2.1 Law and practice: Why do the media violate ethics when reporting on children?	30 min	The session will focus on presenting the factual situation in which the media in Kosovo is. The challenges, the problems, the shortcomings, which then lead to a reporting with many dilemmas for the protection of children. Whose responsibility is it: the journalists or the media as a company?
2.2 The explosion of social networks, with many risks for children	30 min	The importance of media education is vital in today’s reality. Social networks have become the main source of life, making them in many cases also dangerous. The session will provide details on concrete cases where social networks have caused consequences for children.
2.3 Concrete cases: Media violations in relation to children	60 min	This section will present 5 cases where the media in Kosovo were found to have committed ethical violations in reporting on topics involving children. Mainly cases of black journalism, with the disclosure of information that led to the identification, hate speech and stigmatization of the persons involved.

## OBJECTIVES:

- Providing a realistic overview of the media situation in Kosovo: challenges, problems and managerial aspects with direct consequences on journalistic content.
- The role of media education in providing the most in-depth knowledge about the risks and how social media should be used by children.
- Knowledge of concrete cases of violations by the media, their recognition and joint commitment to focus on the public interest and not on the public interest.

## Expected results:

Information and updates from journalists on the functioning of the media in Kosovo, the connection of the media with social networks and the risks that each of them has in case of misuse. The difference between public interest and public interest, as one of the most important factors in daily reporting, especially in child protection. A precise breakdown of the definition of media education, and its role in improving the media space in Kosovo.

## 2. Basic principles in media reporting on children

The responsibility of the media to preserve identity, accurate interviewing, concrete information, factual sources, in relation to children, and not only, is the basis for daily work. However, at a time when many social media sites have received the main attention, have become sources of information, this is not so simple.

In order for the media to maintain credibility and professionalism, reporting on a daily basis about cases involving children must be careful, without stereotypes, without prejudice and, most importantly, without violating the codes and laws in force.

No journalist or media outlet should forget one of the most important principles in daily reporting where children are at the center: children are the greatest interest. So, when the topic and subject are children, there should be no greater interest. The future of children, the risk of stigmatization and bullying, should be the center of attention in every letter a journalist writes.

One of the most important principles, which is also contained in the Juvenile Justice Code in Kosovo, is that children have the absolute right to privacy. And this principle is often violated in Kosovo. This session will show why it is broken, in which cases, and for what purposes. Accurate and professional reporting, not only about children, but especially about children, should be the basic principles for every chronicle and article that appears in the media. Only in this way can prejudice be combated, otherwise there is a risk of increasing them.

When it comes to children and their rights in the media, despite the challenges, children enjoy the full right to representation in the media space in Kosovo. One of the most important principles is that the media is at the service of children, and children's participation in the media should be essential.

### 2.1 Law and practice: Why do media violate ethics when reporting on children?

Beyond a very important legal regulation, beyond the also very important written principles, the media context in Kosovo is one of the most important reasons why reporting on children in Kosovo is challenging. For several years now, there have been no printed newspapers in Kosovo. The greatest responsibility for reporting lies with online media (portals) and television.

The battle for the fastest news among online media has led to children being the target of unethical reporting in many cases. Fast news, published without confirmation from all parties, identifying people involved in multiple events, are just some of the phenomena that are considered to be damaging the effectiveness of the media when reporting on children.

Participants in this session will be introduced in detail to the current media space, the challenges it faces, differences in reporting between portals and televisions and other important details. Portals mainly face small staff and the lack of a clear hierarchy, which is one of the factors for the problems that have been caused in the current media context. On the other hand, in televisions the chain of hierarchy and control before the publication of a chronicle is much stricter, as a result there are fewer errors.

The culmination of this whole situation is the financial aspect in the media. Breaking news is clicks. Clicks bring money, with which the staff in the media is managed. So, starting from the chain of hierarchy, daily articles, reporting on children leads to the problem of the financial aspect in the media, which should not be used in any way as a reason for misinformation regarding reporting on children.

A large part of the media in Kosovo do not have a legal office, as a result, in many cases journalists may not be aware of the legal consequences that improper reporting can bring, ignoring in this case the Laws and the Juvenile Justice Code.

The session will provide participants with several recommendations for addressing these challenges, so that the public interest and the interest of children are paramount in daily media reporting.

## 2.2 The 'explosion' of social networks, with many risks for children

Today, the responsibility for protecting children in the media, as never before, has surpassed the real media. Everyone today has in their hands a media with which they can harm, incite hatred, divide and harm children. At a time when the whole world is facing a huge surge in the use of social networks which in many cases are also uncontrolled, the responsibility for a genuine media education is more necessary than ever before.

Real media in many cases suffer the burden of such a situation, which is often called chaotic. Real media are mixed with various pages on social networks, without author, without owner, without address, and which with various photos and videos can harm larger causes. As a result, criticism of the media is sometimes directed at those who are not responsible. This again brings to the importance of media education, so that the audience is able to distinguish between real and fake media, credible and dubious information.

In recent months, various social networks have been at the forefront of discussions in Kosovo. As a result of some games on the social network TikTok, several students in some schools in Gjakova were identified who hurt themselves.<sup>9</sup>

As a result of social networks, a scandal broke out in Kosovo some time ago with the group 'Albkings' where hundreds of women, including underage girls, became subjects of sexualization by various people. These two cases alone demonstrate how important institutional coordination is, so that a category like children can avoid the consequences of these situations. The great resonance that social networks have created has taken to another level the importance of engaging serious and real media to avoid becoming part of misinformation with consequences for children. Knowing the risk of bullying and stigmatization, the introduction of media education in schools remains one of the most important projects that should be planned, even making it a mandatory subject.

## 2.3 Concrete Cases – Media Violations in Relation to Children

At a time when the use of online media in Kosovo is at its highest level, the competition between portals for fast news, for 'clickbait' headlines and the aim to provide information faster, rather than more accurately, has led to the media in many cases facing various violations, especially in cases where children are the subject. Such situations have occurred mainly in black news events where children have been involved, whether they were murders, rapes, sexual assaults, beatings or other forms of crimes. Participants will be able to discuss 5 major cases in Kosovo regarding reporting on children, where there were dilemmas about ethical and professional violations. This will be done with photographs, videos, as well as a discussion on all the details of the reports.

### Cases - Murder: The murder of Aulon Zeka and the murder of Lulzim Fejzullahu

<https://www.botasot.info/lajme/761608/detaje-te-temerrshme-nga-shoqeria-pas-tre-plumbave-riga-e-preu-ne-fyt-aulonin/>

<https://www.botasot.info/aktuale-lajme/762070/ky-eshte-polici-babai-i-vajzes-qe-shohet-se-estte-e-mvshier-ne-vrasjen-e-aulonit/>

<https://www.panorama.com.al/vrasesi-i-16-vjecarit-djali-i-nje-ish-drejtori-te-larte-ne-kosove-foto/>

<https://insajderi.org/keta-jane-dy-te-dushuarit-qe-goditen-per-vdekje-18-vjecarin-ne-podujeve/>

<https://sinjali.com/keta-jane-dy-te-shuarit-qe-e-goditen-me-veture-dhe-rahene-per-vdekje-18-vjecarin-nga-podujeva/>

<https://zeri.ai/bota/djemte-e-biznesmeneve-i-moren-jeten-18-vjecarit-jetim-kush-jane-autoret-er-i190364>

<sup>9</sup> Media article: <https://kallxo.com/lajm/loja-ne-tiktok-dyshohet-se-nxiti-edhe-tri-nxenes-ne-gjakove-te-lendojne-veten-ne-duar/>

### Rape and sexual assaults: The rape of an 11- year-old girl in Pristina, footage of a sexual assault in one of the primary schools in Pristina

<https://lajmi.net/e-tmerrshme-dy-femije-te-shkolles-faik-konica-ushrojne-dhune-seksuale-ndaj-vajzes-ne-klasen-e-pare/>  
[https://www.syri.net/syri\\_kosova/lajme/251420/videon-e-temerrshme-tek-faik-konica-drejtoresha-e-arsimit-e-quan-loje-femijesh/](https://www.syri.net/syri_kosova/lajme/251420/videon-e-temerrshme-tek-faik-konica-drejtoresha-e-arsimit-e-quan-loje-femijesh/)  
<https://democracia.com/keta-jane-shate-te-arrestuarit-qe-shohenen-per-dhuminin-d-traffikimin-e-11-vjecares-ne-muajin-kershor/>  
[https://www.syri.net/syri\\_kosova/lajme/406940/me-fotografi-e-emra-keta-jane-5-dhunuesit-e-11-vjecares-foto/](https://www.syri.net/syri_kosova/lajme/406940/me-fotografi-e-emra-keta-jane-5-dhunuesit-e-11-vjecares-foto/)

### Images of children from the communities who participated in the organization of the Abetare celebration at the school in Peja.

[https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=hOZqY\\_cu4LA](https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=hOZqY_cu4LA)  
<https://sinjali.com/e-trishte-nxenesit-nga-pakicat-lihen-anash-ne-festen-e-abetares-ne-peje/>  
<https://insajderi.org/fr/ne-festen-e-elementary-students-from-minority-communities-are-left-side%EF%BF%BC/>

## Summary:

The media context in Kosovo is facing many challenges in order to ensure that reporting on children is extremely accurate. Journalists have a great responsibility in safeguarding the public interest in children, however, the small staff in the newsroom, the lack of hierarchy and the lack of legal offices constitute a challenge in addressing the problems.

However, at a time when each social media user has become a ‘media’ in their own right, apart from journalists, the responsibility for careful reporting, media education, and accurate information and sources falls on institutions, society and organizations, with the media who stand at the top of this hierarchy.

### Session III:

Session III / Topics	Duration	Methodology
3. Identification of children in the media	20 min	
3.1 Reporting on children in poverty	20 min	Examples will be provided of how images are published in violation of the code of ethics, where children are involved. Also, advice will be presented on how to conduct professional reporting when the subject is children in poverty.
3.2 Reporting on children from Roma, Ashkali and Egyptian communities	20 min	Children from the Roma, Ashkali and Egyptian communities should not be treated only in a negative light. Stigmatization and hate speech should be avoided. Practical examples of media reporting will be provided.
3.3 Reporting on children with disabilities	20 min	Treatment by journalists should be professional. Appropriate language, and not to violate the rights of children. Advice on appropriate reporting forms.
3.4 Reporting on children in election campaigns	20 min	Discussion and provision of concrete examples from past elections, and the campaign for the February 9 elections.

## Objectives:

- Reflection of the real situation in the media space in Kosovo regarding the challenges of identifying children even in cases where such a thing is not preferred.
- Comparing examples where the media have in some cases violated ethics, and providing advice for the highest quality reporting for different categories of children, based on international practices.
- Discussion about careful language in reports where the subject is children in poverty, with disabilities or from community groups.

## Expected results:

Greater knowledge of careful reporting when dealing with topics for children from different categories of society. Increasing knowledge about the challenges and the most professional handling of cases when the media identifies children in various reports, understanding of international professional advice, for the most qualitative reporting with children of different categories.

## 3. Identification of children in the media

One of the biggest challenges for the media when reporting on various topics concerning children is the disclosure of their identity in the media. While the legislative session will introduce strict conditions under which the identification of children is permitted, their implementation in practice is challenging due to the highly charged media context in Kosovo. The identification of children, for example those suspected or accused of various criminal offenses, is also regulated by the Juvenile Justice Code, however it is often not respected.

As will be presented with some concrete cases, the media often value public interest more than public interest. Thus, publishing the names and surnames, family history, addresses, of children who may potentially have been involved in a situation that is against the law. However, this is strictly prohibited. Both by domestic and international principles.

The media is prohibited from identifying children suspected of various crimes by voice and image. If the public interest is deemed to outweigh these rules, then the use of technology is permitted, enabling voice change and image masking. Images can only be used with parental permission, while the media is prohibited from using sexually suggestive images and images of children in inappropriate positions<sup>10</sup>. The risk of stigmatization and bullying is extremely active, especially in societies like Kosovo, as a result, the media have a great burden to prevent such a thing from happening through their work.

### 3.1 Reporting on children in poverty

In Kosovo, over the years, the media have offered various programs where, in essence, the goal has been to help poor families. Various reports and programs have contained images of difficult conditions, in order to convey the message of help to citizens, so that those families can have their houses built or their conditions improved. However, a challenge that has rarely been discussed has been the position of the children of these families in those chronicles.

In many cases, children have been published with their faces uncovered, barefoot, and with damaged clothes. Such a thing, according to the principles of international codes, negatively affects the image of children, their development, at school, and in the future that awaits them. In many cases, these children have become subjects of bullying, using images that may have been taken years ago, but which cannot be deleted from various online platforms. Considering this, the responsibility of the media in these cases is to take care of the way they report on children, not to identify them, as those images will forever remain in their memory and on the path to the future for them.

This session will also offer practices from the BBC and other international media, on the best forms of reporting where children in poverty are the subject. This conveys a powerful message of help, but on the other hand, also taking care to preserve their identity and future.<sup>11</sup>

### 3.2 Reporting on children from community groups

More or less the same challenges for the media and journalists in relation to child protection, is also for reporting on children from the Roma, Ashkali and Egyptian community groups. The main principle in this session is to convey the message that the media should not report on children from communities, except in a negative aspect. So, about the difficult conditions, about the difficult life. Not that such reports should be avoided, however this affects the creation of stereotypes. The media should be vocal in reporting when children from different groups achieve success in art, sports, politics or any other field, so as not to influence the creation of only a negative image for them.

<sup>10</sup>Manual for the media and journalists regarding reporting on children from the Albanian Media Institute - <https://shorturl.at/sDZ4c>

<sup>11</sup>BBC report on children with Ebola in Africa - <https://www.bbc.co.uk/programmes/b04plw27>

In the following are some recommendations for reporting on children from community groups<sup>12</sup>:

- Children should not be portrayed negatively because of race, religion or community.
- Do not victimize the children of the Roma, Ashkali or Egyptian communities.
- When reporting on these groups, do not use children to identify themselves as community representatives.
- Images of children reinforce prejudice.
- “Am I treating them with the dignity they deserve?”

### 3.3 Reporting on children with disabilities`

The language used is one of the most important principles for the media and journalists when it comes to children with disabilities. Usually, unintentionally, with some expression used in various chronicles, wrong perceptions about children with disabilities can be created in the public, which can later be identifying for a group of children. The voice of these children should be heard in the media, like everyone else’s, however, the role of the media should be strengthened in reporting as carefully as possible.

#### **Recommendations for quality reporting on children with disabilities:**

- Treat them with respect and do not violate their rights.
- Be careful in the use of language and how these children are portrayed in the media.
- They should not be described as “mentally ill”, but rather as children with learning difficulties, or children with mental health problems.
- Emphasis on the difficulties and issues they face.

### 3.4 Reporting on children in election campaigns

Usually, on the eve of elections, at various rallies, political party leaders choose special positions, images and photographs and distribute them on social networks. Of course, for electoral purposes, photographs of children also contain emotion for these political leaders. However, they should be avoided by the media. However, the same should be avoided by the media. In cases where the use of such an image is made on social networks by parties or party officials, the media should avoid using it. And if its use is of such great importance, technical modalities should be used so that the identity of the child is not revealed.

- Children should not be used for campaigning. When pictures are published by party leaders, the media should censor them.
- The media must ensure that images of children are not used negatively.
- Advertisements or television spots with children can harm the formation of children.

### Summary:

The responsibility of the media, in addition to reporting the truth about facts and ethical principles, is also to be careful when reporting on sensitive categories of society. Reporting on children is challenging, however when it comes to children from minority groups, children in poverty, or children with disabilities, the responsibility of journalists and the media is manifold greater.

Media and journalists should respect professional and ethical principles when reporting on these categories of children. They should use correct and accurate language, which avoids stigmatization and the creation of negative perceptions. Identification of children in such cases should only be done in cases where the public interest is great, with the permission of the parent, and in such a way as not to violate the privacy of the children.

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<sup>12</sup>Media ethics and the protection of children’s rights in the media – a guide from Save the Children and the University of Prishtina: <https://shorturl.at/KpBW8>



## **Examples of reports from local and international media , and images that violate the integrity of children:**

BBC reporting based on professional criteria on the Ebola virus:

<https://www.bbc.co.uk/programmes/b04plw27>

Publication of images of children in humanitarian programs such as “Jetimat e Ballkanit”

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=S2dvmVBuTZE>

Reporting on “Edhe unë jam Kosovë” avoiding images of children: <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=BAy00gg2FUy>

Professional reporting on a problem of children from the Roma community:

[https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=\\_3veG9fU8mc](https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=_3veG9fU8mc)

Reporting that is mainly done to present the hard life:

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=kDCAGtITVTo>

Positive reporting on Roma children achieving career success:

[https://fb.watch/wnRj\\_qxHQA/](https://fb.watch/wnRj_qxHQA/)

Professional reporting for children with disabilities:

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=QWwacR7xGZ4>

Reporting a problem, but with careful language:

<https://botapress.info/tronditese-prinderit-nuk-i-lejojne-femijet-ne-shkolle-boykotojne-mesimin-sepse-kane-ne-klase-nje-vajze-me-syndrom-down/>

Reporting on children in campaigns:

<https://reporteri.net/lajme/lokhjet-lokale/kandidati-i-aak-se-per-kryetar-te-decanit-i-keqperdore-femijet-per-fushate-lokhdore-ky-veprim-eshte-i-banned-by-law/>

## Session IV

Session IV / Topics	Duration	Methodology
4. Interviewing children	20 min	The best models of interviewing children in the media will be presented, as well as a comparison with unprofessional models and the consequences that improper interviewing can cause.
4.1 Children's voice in the media	20 minutes	The importance of children's representation in the media is great. However, parents must be aware of their rights and the roles of institutions regulating the media in Kosovo.
4.2 UNICEF's six principles for protecting children in mass media	20 minutes	This session will present UNICEF's six principles for quality reporting and child protection in the media.
4.3 Six guidelines for professional interviewing of children	20 min	Six guidelines/recommendations for how journalists should conduct a professional interview with children.
4.4 Seven recommendations for quality reporting	20 min	In addition to protecting children, this session will provide recommendations from international conventions for quality reporting where children are the subject.
4.5 BBC code of ethics for children's reporting	20 min	Participants will be informed of the BBC's ethical principles for reporting on children.

### Objectives:

- Knowledge of the main principles from local and international organizations and media for quality reporting and child protection in the media.
- Knowledge of the great importance of professional interviewing of children, and comparison with cases where unprofessional interviewing has caused great damage.
- Knowledge of the BBC code of ethics for quality reporting and child protection in the media.

### Expected results:

Discussion and presentation of best practices on how to interview children in the media, how to avoid negative impact, and the consequences of unprofessional interviewing. Knowledge and accurate understanding of all international practices for quality reporting and child protection in the media.

## 4. Interviewing children

One of the most difficult tasks for journalists in relation to child protection in the media is interviewing children. There are cases when journalists do not pay attention to details, asking a question that puts children in an unenviable position. As a result, under pressure, children may give different responses, which then go viral and the consequences for children are great.

This session will discuss one of the cases where improper interviewing of children has caused great consequences. This is about the riots of March 2004, where three children lost their lives in the Ibër River. An OSCE report concluded that the main factor that incited the March riots was media reporting. This report had highlighted an interview by Public Television with a child who witnessed the event. The journalist's questions, interviewing the child who had just escaped from a crime, culminated in misinformation from the media, further fueling tensions.<sup>13</sup> The OSCE found that the media reporting was unprofessional, adding statements from interviewees that they had not said. However, interviewing children in a state of mental trauma, or after such situations, is not preferable.

### 4.1 Children's voice in the media

The challenges mentioned and the care that the media and journalists should have in relation to child protection should in no way create the impression that there should be a smaller presence of children in the media. In fact, it is quite the opposite. The voice of children in the media should be heard more and more every day, because this is the only way in which reporting on them can be improved. What is required is only respect for ethical and professional principles, related to the legal obligations arising from the legislation in force.

The media, in addition to reporting, has another function. They must educate children about their role in reporting the truth, and the rights that children have in the media. Parents should also be informed and educated about their rights if any principle is violated when reporting on children. Parents should be informed about the role of the Independent Media Commission, the Kosovo Press Council and other mechanisms.

It is the media's obligation to create an ideal space for children, while also contributing to ensuring that that space is not misused, but is used based on ethical and professional principles.

### 4.2 UNICEF's Six Principles for Child Protection in the Media

The UNICEF organization has six principles regarding the protection and reporting of children in the mass media:<sup>14</sup>

- Respect the dignity and rights of children in all circumstances.
- When reporting, be careful about privacy, and decisions that directly affect children.
- Protect the interests of children
- Provide children the right to have their views considered in a manner appropriate to their age and maturity.
- Consult with those closest to the children's situations. Do not publish stories that endanger children, their brothers, their sisters, even when their identity is not changed.

### 4.3 Six guidelines for interviewing children

- Do not harm any child. Avoid questions, attitudes, judgmental and that reactivate their pain.
- Do not discriminate in the choice of children because of gender, race, religion.
- Do not ask children to tell stories that are not their own.
- Explain the purpose of the interview to the parents.
- Get permission from your parents or guardian. (text, photo, video)
- Pay attention to where the child is interviewed.

<sup>13</sup> OSCE report: <https://shorturl.at/DpJuj>

<sup>14</sup> Professional guidelines for reporting according to UNICEF: <https://www.unicef.org/eca/media/ethical-guidelines>

## 4.4 Seven recommendations for quality reporting

- Don't stigmatize. Avoid the risk of abuse or discrimination.
- Always provide clear context for the child's story and image
- Change the name when reporting a victim of abuse, etc.
- If you decide to use the identity, it must be protected from further harm.
- Confirm the accuracy of what the child states in sensitive cases.
- When you think a child is in danger, report it generally, not individually because this causes trauma.

## 4.5 BBC Code of Ethics

- Always prioritize children's safety.<sup>15</sup>
- Act within professional boundaries, and ensure contact with minors.
- Do not take responsibility for a vulnerable child or adult. If the child needs care, notify the parent. Take responsibility only in emergencies.
- Be careful with your language. It should be appropriate language. Avoid favoritism.
- Treat children fairly, without prejudice or discrimination

### Summary:

The media has the main function of providing space for children's voices to be heard, including educating parents about their rights in cases where their children's rights are violated by the media.

UNICEF, Save the Children and other organizations, the BBC, local and international conventions, and well-known media platforms have strictly defined recommendations and guidelines for reporting on children to be qualitative and professional.

The media in Kosovo do not have their own code of ethics, but operate with the codes of ethics of the IMC and the KMC. For children in the mass media to be protected from unprofessional news and negative reporting, joint work is needed between organizations, media, and institutions.

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<sup>15</sup>BBC code of ethics: <https://www.bbc.com/aboutthebbc/reports/policies/childprotection>

## List of materials/resources

Report of Save the Children :

<https://www.dukagjini.com/save-the-children-tiktok-u-hapesira-ku-bullizohen-me-se-shumti-femijet-ne-kosove/>

Convention on the Rights of the Child - <https://shorturl.at/v80lz>

Constitution of Kosovo - <https://gzk.rks-gov.net/ActDetail.aspx?ActID=3702>

Law on Child Protection - <https://gzk.rks-gov.net/ActDocumentDetail.aspx?ActID=20844>

Law on the Independent Media Commission : <https://gzk.rks-gov.net/ActDetail.aspx?ActID=2809>

IPC Regulation for Child Protection: <https://shorturl.at/9x9FZ>

Code of the Council of Written Media of Kosovo: <https://shorturl.at/XjsMw>

Hybrid report: <https://shorturl.at/TBBPY>

Media article: <https://kallxo.com/lajm/loja-ne-tiktok-dyshohet-se-nxiti-edhe-tri-nxenese-ne-gjakove-te-lendojne-veten-ne-duar/>

Manual for the media and journalists regarding reporting on children from the Albanian Media Institute - <https://shorturl.at/sDZ4c>

BBC report on children with Ebola in Africa - <https://www.bbc.co.uk/programmes/b04plw27>

Media ethics and the protection of children's rights in the media – guidelines from Save the Children and the University of Prishtina: <https://shorturl.at/KpBW8>

OSCE report: <https://shorturl.at/DpJuj>

Professional guidelines for reporting according to UNICEF: <https://www.unicef.org/eca/media/ethical-guidelines>

BBC code of ethics: <https://www.bbc.com/aboutthebbc/reports/policies/childprotection>







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