

Children, Violence and the Media in an Expanding Europe

PressWise/IFJ European Pilot Training Project under the EC Daphne Initiative

This pilot project set out to develop training materials for print and broadcast journalists to improve media coverage of children affected by violence.

Working with the International Federation of Journalists, media groups and child welfare organisations in the Czech Republic, France, Spain and the United Kingdom, The PressWise Trust, a UK-based media ethics charity, has devised and tested three sets of modules: The Rights of Children & Codes of Conduct; Use of Images; Interviewing Children. They can be used on a 'pick-and-mix' basis in vocational, in-service and distance learning settings.

Selected bibliographies and websites were also assembled.

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EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

The pilot training Project Children, Violence and the Media in an Expanding Europe was funded by the European Commission under the Daphne Initiative.

Its primary aim was to devise and test training modules for media professionals to improve the quality and sensitivity of media coverage of violence, particularly violence affecting children, and to build a network of journalist trainers able to deliver such training to their colleagues.

Three sets of training modules were devised and then tested, and reformulated in response to evaluation. They cover:

- The Rights of Children & Codes of Conduct
- Uses of Images
- Interviewing Children.

Though each module could stand alone, they have been constructed in such a way that elements could be extracted and combined to suit different circumstances. They could thus be used in vocational, in-service, or distance learning settings.

Full details of the modules (in English) can be found by using this link.

The pilot training modules, available in four languages, are intended for adaptation and use in vocational and in-service training across the expanded European Union. For translations into Czech, French or Spanish, please use the links on the index page of this site.

France, Spain and the UK were selected as testing grounds in order to add value to the Project by producing a body of materials accessible in many parts of the world, in particular Francophone Africa, Spanish speaking Central and South America and throughout the English speaking world. The Czech Republic was chosen as a useful pilot for other accession countries in Central and Eastern Europe.

The idea for the pilot project arose from growing international concern about children's rights, violence in the media, and the portrayal of children affected by violence. It built on a number of previous PressWise initiatives, including collaborative projects with the International Federation of Journalists (IFJ) and various UN agencies on the issue of children's rights and the media.

The project was designed, developed and managed by The PressWise Trust, a UK-based media ethics charity in partnership with the IFJ which represents journalists world-wide, and in collaboration with media professionals, unions and organisations in the Czech Republic, France, Spain and the United Kingdom. International agencies, non-governmental organisations (NGOs) and training organisations operating in each of the pilot countries were also consulted.

The Project was based on the view that journalists can make a significant difference to public understanding and attitudes if they become more sensitive to the impact of violence and representations of violence upon children, to how children and young people are portrayed in such coverage, how to listen to children and give them a voice, and how to help them become more involved in the media process.

As a pilot, the Project concentrated on setting up a training network and refining relevant materials and country-specific practical examples in each of the four participating countries. It sought to assess the strengths and weaknesses of the training materials; to carry out recommended improvements; and to highlight any modifications needed to allow for varying cultures, legal structures and different professional practices.

Following an initial period of research the Project launched with a two-day Seminar in London in February 2000 which brought together, journalists, trainers, media regulators, and specialists with professional concerns about child psychology and the impact of violence and the media upon children. Seminars were then organised for trainers, working journalists and non-governmental bodies in the Czech Republic, France, Spain and the United Kingdom. These were designed to familiarise participants with the Project aims, the issues and training materials and techniques. The modules were also tested on postgraduate vocational training courses in the UK.

A multi-disciplinary international seminar to evaluate the project was held in conjunction with the IFJ in Brussels in September 1990. It was also used to assess the possibilities of how it could expand the range of countries covered within Europe.

In all over 80 journalists from 11 countries and more than 50 representatives of non-media organisations concerned with child welfare participated in the project. Parts of the modules were also tested by PressWise trainers in Armenia, Georgia, India, Macedonia, Moldova, Peru, Romania and Slovakia, at no cost to the Project.

A bibliography of some 600 articles and books was assembled, along with details of more than 100 websites for use by future trainers and media professionals, covering:

- Children and direct exposure to violence; refugee children; the victim's perspective;
- Children and media violence (real-life)
- Children and media violence (fiction)
- Children and media violence (general)

In response to the feedback, the final versions of the training modules were adapted to allow easy adaptation across cultures and to take account of widely differing legal structures and professional practices. Trainers were encouraged to choose their own practical examples from their own country's print, broadcast and on-line media.

The Project team considers that this Pilot Project could be extended over the next three years to cover other EU and accession states, and to explore the possibility of expanding the project into colleges and universities that provide vocational training. This would entail further changes to the training materials to allow for trainees' lack of practical experience and knowledge of how the media works.

The experience of the past year has also demonstrated the need to consider further Projects concerned with:

- media representations of women, domestic violence and rape.
- alerting media executives to the importance of appreciating the rights of children and women the impact of representations of violence.
- fostering appreciation of the importance of media ethics and awareness of the issues dealt with by the project among vocational training institutions throughout (the expanded) European Union.
- training programmes for photographers and camera operators.
- building of networks between journalists and non-governmental organisations across European border to improve the quality coverage about abuses of children's rights.

Mike Jempson
Project Manager
Bristol, 28 March 2001

Chapter 1: THE PROJECT

Aims

1.01 The UK-based Pilot Training Project Children, Violence and the Media in an Expanding Europe set out to devise a training package for media professionals in the Czech Republic, France, Spain, the United Kingdom to improve the quality and sensitivity of media coverage of violence, particularly violence affecting children. It aimed to make journalists aware of the consequences of their coverage and to provide a positive framework for future action.

1.02 It was a collaborative project managed by journalists working with media unions and non-governmental bodies. It had both research and practical elements - firstly, examining the complex and contentious issue of journalistic responsibility in relation to media coverage of violence, children affected by violence and the impact of media violence on children, and secondly, developing compact training modules to be delivered on a pick-and-mix basis as part of vocational training, or as mid-career in-service or distance learning.

1.03 As a Pilot Project the aim was to produce draft modules which can be further adapted to suit different situations, and to make recommendations about how such training could be taken forward in EU and accession states, to assist media professionals to appreciate the importance of improving public understanding about the impact of all forms of violence upon children through accurate and responsible reporting that respects the rights and dignity of children.

1.04 France, Spain and the UK were selected in order to produce a body of materials accessible in many parts of the world, in particular for adaptation and use in Francophone Africa, Spanish speaking Central and South America and throughout the English speaking world. The Czech Republic was chosen as a useful pilot for other accession countries in Central and Eastern Europe.

Origins

1.05 The project was initiated by the UK-based media ethics charity, The PressWise Trust (PressWise), which has been concerned for some years about actual and potential damage to children caused by insensitive media representations of violence in general, and of violence against children in particular. PressWise has sought to address the professional difficulties facing journalists when seeking to investigate stories about the abuse of children, especially in the contexts of an increasingly competitive media industry where circulation and ratings often take precedence over ethical considerations.

1.06 Children are rarely represented or appreciated in the mass media as human beings with rights, dignity and developing personalities - they tend to appear as victims, villains, or as marketing devices to sell newspapers, win ratings or induce sympathy and raise donations for children's charities. Children's rights seldom arise in vocational training for media professionals, and among child welfare organisations there is a perception that the media lack sensitivity to these rights and awareness of the potential consequences of their work upon children.

1.07 In 1997 PressWise organised the UK Child Exploitation and the Media Forum which brought together child survivors of abuse, child welfare organisations, journalists, lawyers, police and social workers, to discuss some of these issues in response to the 1996 Stockholm World Congress Against the Commercial Sexual Exploitation of Children. The Forum recommended that sensitivity training is a crucial element in improving media coverage of such topics.

1.08 Since then PressWise has worked with the International Federation of Journalists (IFJ), the International Labour Organisation (ILO), UNESCO, the United Nations Children's Fund UNICEF and other organisations concerned with child welfare to raise awareness of the significant role the media can play in helping to eradicate child exploitation by informing the public and exposing the perpetrators.

1.09 PressWise and the IFJ share the view that the place of children in society and recognition of their rights will be better appreciated if children are given more of a voice, and are assisted to become more directly involved in the media process. This requires a willingness on the part of the industry to consider the implications of the messages given out by the portrayal of children and young people in mass media, and to listen carefully to children and their advocates in determining what is 'in the best interests of the child'.

1.10 A world-wide survey of voluntary and statutory codes of professional conduct carried out by PressWise for the IFJ in 1998 revealed that few contain any mention of children. Together PressWise and the IFJ drew up draft Guidelines and Principles for Reporting on Issues Involving Children later that year to stimulate debate and effect improvement in media coverage of children's issues. These draft guidelines are now undergoing a formal consultation process throughout the world.

1.11 Both partners in this Project are associated with The Oslo Challenge issued in 1999 by the Norwegian government and the UNICEF on the tenth anniversary of the UN Convention on the Rights of the Child, which highlighted the importance of the media's role in this area and emphasised the value of children's participation in the media.

The Partners

1.12 The PressWise Trust is a registered charity concerned with all aspects of media ethics, based in Bristol in the West of England but operating internationally. Established in 1993 by people whose lives had been severely affected as a consequence of inaccurate or sensational media coverage in the UK, its Director and Associate Director are journalists with combined experience of almost 80 years all in sectors of the mass media and in media training in the UK and throughout the world.

1.13 PressWise provides advice and support to individuals and organisations wishing to redress the effects of inaccurate, intrusive or otherwise problematic media coverage. It also devises and delivers training in use of the media for non-governmental organisations and other sectors of civil society, including advocacy groups working with children, disabled people, ethnic minorities, the mentally ill, pensioners, prisoners and their families, and refugees. The Trust also delivers ethics training to media professionals.

1.14 Current PressWise projects include Representing Lost Childhood, and Refugees Asylum-seekers and the Mass Media. The Trust has run training courses for media professionals and children in Africa, Asia, Central and Eastern Europe and Latin America and worked with journalists involved in conflict in the Balkans and West Africa. The value of this Pilot has been enhanced by testing parts of the modules during recent PressWise training courses in Armenia, Georgia, India, Lima, Macedonia and Moldova, at no cost to the Project.

1.15 The Trust engages in public debate on media issues, and undertakes research, training and advocacy contracts. Its clients have included the IFJ, UNESCO, UNICEF and the World Health Organisation. PressWise publishes reports and training materials, and operates two websites devoted to many different aspects of media law, policy and practice, with a combined 'hit-rate' of about 800 per month.

1.16 The International Federation of Journalists is a non-governmental, non-profit organisation set up in 1952 and is the world's largest organisation of journalists. It comprises more than 130 national trade unions and associations of journalists in over 100 countries covering more than 450,000 journalists.

1.17 The IFJ promotes co-ordinated international action to defend press freedom and social justice through the development of strong, free and independent trade unions of journalists. The IFJ does not subscribe to any given political viewpoint, but promotes human rights, democracy and pluralism so that all points of view can be freely expressed.

1.18 The IFJ is opposed to discrimination of all kinds - whether on grounds of sex, creed, colour or race - and condemns the use of media as propaganda to promote intolerance and social conflict. The IFJ believes in freedom of political and cultural expression and defends trade union and other basic human rights whenever and wherever they come under attack.

1.19 The IFJ is recognised as the organisation that speaks for journalists at international level, notably within the United Nations system including UNESCO, the ILO and the UN itself. The Congress, which meets every three years, decides basic policy and work is carried out by a 10-strong Secretariat based in Brussels, under the direction of a 20-member Executive Committee. At its 1998 Congress in Recife, Brazil the IFJ launched a three-year programme of consultations with member unions about its Draft Guidelines for the reporting of children which are expected to be ratified at the Seoul Congress in 2001.

1.20 For the purposes of this Project PressWise and the IFJ worked alongside colleagues from the National Union of Journalists (UK & Ireland), Innocence in Danger (France), Save the Children (Spain), the Independent Centre for Journalism (Czech Republic) and numerous other organisations and individual journalists concerned with child welfare issues.

Chapter 2: IMPLEMENTATION

The process

2.01 This complex and innovative Project had four distinct but overlapping phases, roughly corresponding to each quarter of the contract period November 1999 - December 2000: consultation and research; development and testing of materials; evaluation and refinement; production of the final report.

2.02 At the start a Project team was assembled including print and broadcast journalists with experience of basic skills and media ethics training in Africa, Asia, Europe, Latin America and the former Soviet Union. During the research phase they worked closely with the Child Psychotherapy Trust (CPT) and the Medical Foundation for the Care of Victims of Torture (Medical Foundation). The CPT was in the process of completing a complementary but unrelated project and the Medical Foundation provides therapeutic services for traumatised children from all over the world. The team also engaged with The Centre for the Study of Crime and Justice at Edgehill College, Liverpool which was studying the impact of disaster reporting upon journalists, and had previously undertaken research about on media coverage of disasters and violence against children.

2.03 Guidance notes were produced to ensure that those producing the draft modules had due regard to gender and cultural issues. Research was commissioned to identify relevant media materials and background technical papers about the impact of violence on children, and media representations of violence, for use by potential trainers and trainees.

2.04 In collaboration with the National Union of Journalists' Ethics Council, the Project team, the consultants and potential trainers were brought together for a two-day Seminar in London to familiarise participants with the aims of the Project, discuss issues, review research, and begin the process of developing training materials and techniques.

2.05 Draft training modules in English, for print and broadcast journalists, were produced during the second phase. These were tested and reviewed during a second two-day seminar held at a Bristol University Study Centre. Further research was undertaken and an extensive bibliography was commissioned to provide access for trainers and others to more in-depth consideration of the issues at stake.

2.06 The third phase included consultations with media professionals and child welfare organisations from across Europe at an international seminar held in Brussels, the testing of modules in the Czech Republic, France and Spain, reformulation of the basic package of modules, and re-testing on a UK vocational training course.

2.07 The aims and issues of the project provoked lively discussion and the draft training materials were well received, although it became evident that the scope of the Project would have to have been extended considerably to cover the variety of closely related topics raised by those who participated - coverage of the commercial sexual exploitation of children, investigative reporting, paedophilia and the Internet, violence against women (and domestic violence in particular).

2.08 The final phase consolidated the work of the previous period by refining the modules, evaluating the project and writing up this Final Report. The Project team began to plan dissemination of the results through the internal communication networks of European media unions, the web-sites of participating organisations and distribution of the printed report to media organisations, industry training bodies and children's rights organisations. It also began to explore the possibility of expanding the project into other countries, especially through colleges and universities that provide vocational training for the media industry.

The training in context

2.09 The journalist's job is to report what is happening, especially the unpalatable, but there is always a risk that 'telling the story' may exacerbate the harm done to children. Since 1998 PressWise has been engaged in ethics training with journalists in the former Soviet Union who have been grappling with the twin dilemmas of operating in a market-driven media and having to report to a societies that have been in denial about the abuse and exploitation of children. Few ground rules exist, and when shocking stories come to light they tend to get sensational treatment. So young survivors of incest, rape, abduction, institutional abuse, war and commercial sexual exploitation are as likely to be identified to an incredulous public as the perpetrators of these crime.

2.10 Similar dilemmas also face journalists in western Europe where, in recent years, the public have had to confront extremely unpleasant home truths about the way in which some children have been abused by parents, carers, the state and strangers; where there are growing numbers of unaccompanied young refugees displaced by conflict and extremely vulnerable; and where the market for pornography and violence is now part of the mainstream - through the Internet, video games, cartoons and feature films.

2.11 Indeed children in the EU are as likely to face exposure to sexually explicit and violent material as in the 'emerging democracies' where adverts for chat-lines and pornographic materials are subsidising the new tabloid ('yellow') press through which people learn about the latest gossip, social crises and armed conflicts that are unsettling their country or region.

2.12 At the same time there is growing concern throughout western, central and eastern Europe about the impact of media violence on children: war as news; war and crime movies; 'gangsta rap' lyrics; video games and video 'nasties', etc. On their own journalists cannot, indeed it is not necessarily their function to, take a stand against such excesses. However they can seek to ensure that their own integrity is not jeopardised by deliberately or inadvertently contributing to the abuse of children. And if, as many would contend, their function is to enhance the public's ability to understand and participate in society - including challenging the values of those who make capital from violence and abuse - journalists need to appreciate the special position of children in society, as individuals with rights and a contribution to make rather than as passive victims whose plight must simply be recorded.

2.13 That was the rationale behind this Project. The Project team took the view that instead of waiting to be told what to do, or what not to do, by media proprietors, the law or vested interests, journalists need to develop their own strategies for approaching coverage of violence against children and the commercialisation or glamorising of violence which now appears to be endemic.

2.14 Working with experienced journalists who have between them covered some of the worst excess of violence towards children - child labour, child soldiers, natural disasters, poverty, the physical, psychological and sexual abuse of children, refugee camps, 'street children' and war - the Project sought to devise means by which their colleagues can come to an understanding of what 'the best interests of the child' might mean in terms of media representations of such stories.

2.15 A key consideration has been that journalists rightly resist attempts to tell them how to do their job, since that is a slippery slope that compromises their independence. At the same time the Project has been conscious that market-driven media brings with it pressures to conform to quite superficial interpretations of 'what the reader/listener/reader/viewer wants', just as media freedom in societies where state control has predominated can easily fall prey both to this type of pressure and to a view that the personal opinions and preferences of the media professionals have a special validity.

2.16 Members of the Project team were also aware that specialist topic areas are rarely afforded much time or depth in basic vocational training courses, and certainly that trainee journalists are unlikely to have been familiarised with the rights of children as delineated by the UN Convention

of the Rights of the Child (UNCRC). Furthermore, mid-career in-service training seldom addresses these types of issues

2.17 In consequence the pilot training modules were specifically devised to speak directly to working journalists by challenging their assumptions, communicating fresh information, encouraging debate and further research, and reflecting common 'newsroom dilemmas'.

2.18 The three modules together could be delivered as a single course lasting two days. They comprise:

- a. The needs, rights and status of children - a series of culturally non-specific "warming-up exercises" which also examine the IFJ draft guidelines on the reporting of children. These have proved to be a useful means of measuring participants' general and technical knowledge about children's rights, and generate lively discussion about the legal and ethical implications for professional practice.
- b. Putting children in the picture - a series of practical exercises about the use of images of children, involving role-play and problem solving. They explore the ethical issues involved in using pictures of children affected by violence and cover contentious issues such as permission, privacy, identification, anonymity, confidentiality, representation, sexualised images, re-use of pictures, manipulation of images, and codes of conduct. They develop a deeper understanding of the delicate balance between journalists' professional and creative obligations and the children's rights.
- c. Interviewing children - practical exercises aimed at raising awareness among media professionals of the right of children to express themselves freely and the need for their views and opinions to be heard. They seek to develop effective and sensitive interviewing skills and techniques for use with children, through role-play and evaluation of real situations. The aim is to encourage journalists to empathise with children in order to represent their views in a fair and balanced manner, without compromising journalistic impartiality.

2.19 Each module combines simple, timed exercises with opportunities for debate and discussion. They mirror the range of disciplines undertaken by journalists in the different media - use of language and image in print, radio, and television. They also reflect the PressWise 'credo' that press freedom is a responsibility exercised by journalist on behalf of the public rather than a licence to profit from others' misfortune.

2.20 The modules have been designed to operate as 'stand alone' sessions or as 'pick and mix' selections to suit the interests of those using them. They can be as readily applied in a 'classroom' or a work place setting, or as 'distance-learning' packages. They are not designed to provide ready-made answers but to pose questions and encourage reflection upon the personal and collective responsibilities of journalists and their industry.

2.21 Background research was conducted to provide the Project with a profile of the media in each pilot country, and to provide information about the coverage of children affected by violence and the impact of media violence upon children. This body of research, including a bibliography of almost 600 books and articles and over 100 useful websites, should prove an invaluable resource for those (trainers and journalists) wishing to delve further into the issues addressed by the modules. The research findings, together with more detailed notes for trainers about ways of tackling some of the issues likely to be raised when using the modules, is available from PressWise.

Chapter 3: REPORTS FROM SEMINARS

Launch Seminar

3.01 This two-day launch seminar held in London was intended as a 'scene-setting' preparatory event for potential trainers, to share information and ideas about media coverage of children affected by violence and the impact of media violence on children. It followed prior research and discussion between the Project managers and specialists concerned with the training of journalists, the care and protection of traumatised children and the influence of the media.

3.02 The event brought together 31 print and broadcast journalists, journalism trainers, media analysts and regulators, media unions and child psychotherapists. Its aim was to encourage a collegiate approach to the development of training materials and to strengthen understanding of the issues addressed by the project.

3.03 The Seminar was opened by John Foster, General Secretary of the National Union of Journalists (UK and Ireland). He stressed the importance of developing the confidence of media professionals to rely upon their own ethical judgements in the face of commercial pressures and the constraints of the working environment when covering sensitive issues which also lend themselves to sensational representation. He also pointed out that the NUJ has had a Code of Conduct since 1936, which is kept under review, and he hoped that the Project would offer guidance about how the Code might be improved especially as it currently contains no specific mention of children. He also emphasised that journalists are far more likely to respond to peer review than to didactic approaches from outside the industry, since media professionals fiercely guard their independence.

3.04 Project manager Mike Jempson outlined its purpose and structure. As a journalist and an advocate for those who have suffered as a result of unethical or ill-considered media coverage, he insisted that journalists need to have a firm grounding in human rights issues, and in particular the rights of children. They also need to become more sensitive to the individual experiences and feelings of children. Media professionals could make a huge difference if they began to think about how children and young people are represented, to what extent their voices were heard, and ways in which they could become more involved in media processes.

Training priorities

3.05 As a journalism-trainer Charlotte Barry emphasised the need for those working on the Project to reflect upon and stress a commitment to accuracy and the defence of human (especially children's) rights. Journalists should aspire to challenge rather than promote stereotypes, and she drew attention to gender-related, cultural and child-sensitive issues touched upon in the Project's Gender & Cultural Sensitivity Guidance Notes for Trainers. When developing practical exercises and choosing examples, trainers should seek to ensure that their examples do not undermine the key messages of the Project. Journalists in each participant country should make use of domestic and international sources to find relevant examples that have meaning for those attending their courses.

3.06 There followed a session during which participants discussed examples of good and bad practice from the UK media that highlighted the ill-considered language and images, and the reinforcement of stereotypes, widespread generalisations and value judgements in the portrayal of children. They identified two conflicting issues - the need for children to feel a part of the society reflected in media coverage and to have more of a say versus the pressure put on parents, carers and young people by media professionals to consent to pictures or interviews that might not always be in a child's best interest.

Radio

3.07 Radio trainer Sarah McNeill said that a key imperative of the project was to give children affected by violence their own unmoderated voice, and that radio provided the ideal medium since it was less intrusive and avoided many of the problems associated with identification that

occur when images are used. She underlined the importance of developing guidelines for interviewing young people about their experiences, especially 'street children' who seek to survive without obvious adult carers. Such interviews require careful preparation, and time to establish a relationship of trust. Children like to express their views and to hear those of other children, she said, and they want adults not just to hear them but also to listen to them. She explained the thinking behind children's radio workshops which give children ownership and control by providing them with broadcasting skills and knowledge. By teaching them how to use equipment and how programmes are made, children are empowered to plan their own programmes, discuss the editing process and have a say in the selection of material used.

3.08 In the discussion that followed both broadcasters and child psychotherapists agreed that radio techniques might give children the opportunity to disclose traumatic personal experiences with a degree of anonymity. But there were serious concerns as to what extent this experience could be therapeutic. There was a danger of stirring up painful memories that could cause further damage to highly vulnerable young people.

The mind of the child

3.09 Louise Pankhurst of the Child Psychotherapy Trust, psychotherapist Sira Derman of the Portman Clinic, and Sheila Melzak of the Medical Foundation for the Victims of Torture examined the child's perspective. They described their professional dealings with children who had direct experience of violence and trauma, notably as refugees and earthquake victims. Traumatized children separate their memories from their feelings. Rather than the telling, it is the making of the story that can be therapeutic. Journalists should be concerned about the way the media and their own coverage can cause additional harm to children affected by violence. What was more important at the end of the day - the child or the story? Questioning the need to conduct face-to-face interviews, which might cause further trauma, they acknowledged that children have a right to tell their own stories, which often go unreported. However, it is also important to respect a child's privacy and confidentiality. They recognised that journalists face a conflict between delivering deadlines and allowing adequate, pressure-free time to interview children, and that they were under even more pressure to deliver when covering public rather than personal trauma. Journalists need to consider how they themselves respond to traumatic events in their private and professional lives, and what mechanisms they employed to handle the effects. They should also be prepared to scrutinise their own perceptions of childhood. Training in observational and non-verbal communication skills would help them deal with children more sensitively. The question journalists should be asking themselves is: "If this was my child, what would I do?"

3.10 This session ended with a demonstration that often children's drawings are a more powerful expression of their experience and emotions than photographs or words. Thought should be given to making use of such images instead of appealing to prurient interests and risking identification by depicting the child photographically.

3.11 Journalists present accepted there were no easy answers. It is in the public interest for the media to cover violent and traumatic events. The onus was on journalists to tell children's stories accurately and in a non-sensational way that still captured the attention (and engaged the sympathies) of readers and viewers. However there would also remain a conflict between the commercial necessities of creating and marketing a media product that would 'sell' and the sensitivities of those who found themselves (often through no fault of their own) in the media spotlight.

Codes of conduct

3.12 This professional dilemma was highlighted by Bettina Peters of the International Federation of Journalists (IFJ), when she spoke to her paper, *The Role and Responsibilities of Journalists*. In order to raise public awareness, journalists need freedom of access to official sources, which was not always available. In particular, they had to measure the legal, cultural, commercial and editorial constraints under which they worked against their responsibility to minimise harm to vulnerable children. The challenge for journalists is to be aware of their responsibilities and to

promote improvements. The IFJ Draft Guidelines on Reporting of Children are an attempt to ensure that media professionals acknowledge the importance of accuracy and sensitivity when dealing with issues that affect children.

Television

3.13 Excerpts from a television documentary shown at the Seminar illuminated the need for specific guidance about working with children. In 1999 the Broadcasting Standards Commission, one of the UK media regulatory bodies that deals with issues of accuracy, fairness, taste and decency, upheld a viewer's complaint about an edition of BBC Panorama, the main UK current affairs programme, which has dealt with the problems of foster children. It had included a sequence in which an 11-year-old boy broke down in tears before the camera. The BBC had argued that the programme gave a voice to a rarely heard group of children on an important issue of concern and that it was right to represent their reactions with proper sensitivity. But the Broadcasting Standards Commission (BSC) decided that the nature of the journalist's interview with the boy seemed intent upon exploiting his feelings rather than examining the evidence. It added superfluous emotional intensity and was unnecessarily intrusive, and the BBC was quietly admonished.

3.14 Journalists present concurred with that view, while admitting that the images produced were compelling and that it would be a brave person who tried to argue in an editorial meeting that the offending footage should be dropped. They felt that more would have been achieved in alerting media professionals to children's rights had the ruling about this flagship programme been given more publicity at the time.

Media analysis

3.15 Criminologists and media analysts Ann Jemphrey and Eileen Berrington expressed concern about the extent of media intrusion and sensationalism in reporting extreme disasters and multiple deaths. Their investigations concentrated on the role of journalists at the Hillsborough football stadium disaster in 1989, the James Bulger murder in 1993 and the Dunblane primary school tragedy in 1996. There is a pressing need for increased awareness among media professionals about the enduring and harmful effects of insensitive and inaccurate reports or pictures, and of the dangers of accepting "official" versions of events too readily. They confirmed that codes of practice were frequently rendered unworkable under commercial constraints and found there was little training and support for journalists reporting traumatic events. In the case of the Hillsborough tragedy readers in Liverpool had marked their distaste for coverage in The Sun newspaper by boycotting the newspaper - causing a dip in circulation figures in the city from which the paper has never recovered. Readers choose their newspapers for a variety of reasons but loyal readers stay with a title because it delivers the information they require in a familiar way, so readers' boycotts are rare but effective methods of communicating distaste for editorial judgements.

The impact of trauma on journalists

3.16 Psychotherapist Gladeana McMahon, who has worked with journalists and others suffering from post-traumatic stress disorder, described the symptoms that might affect victims, witnesses, emergency workers and journalists in the aftermath of harrowing events. She emphasised how widespread and repeated media coverage means that sufferers are never able truly to escape their trauma. Anniversaries of tragic events could also trigger traumatic stress. In her view the media industry needs to acknowledge more readily that media professionals covering distressing events might themselves be affected emotionally, and should have access to counselling.

3.17 Journalists admitted to having felt the emotional consequences of reporting about abuse, murders, accidental death and other disasters, but explained that it is a relatively recent phenomenon for editors to allow recovery time and counselling to staff returning from disaster or war zones. There is a distinctly 'macho' culture within the media that requires an instant ability to switch off emotions and switch on to the next story, allowing little space for reflection and recovery on return from assignments that may have undermined a person's emotional

equilibrium. Small wonder that addictions such as smoking and alcoholism are common, as are heart attacks. Several of those present admitted that their view of the world had been curdled by reporting on disasters, violence towards children and the sexual abuse of children, and recognised the symptoms of post-trauma stress disorder in themselves.

Issues for development

3.18 Participants noted that the Project fits comfortably within the terms of the Oslo Challenge issued to the media by the Norwegian government and UNICEF on the 10th anniversary of the United Nations Convention on the Rights of the Child (UNCRC) - emphasising the crucial role media can play both in acknowledging that children have rights and in granting them greater opportunities to represent themselves. It was agreed that the UNCRC and its implications for the media should form the basis of the training strategies, along with the IFJ Draft Guidelines on Reporting of Children.

3.19 The Seminar discussed what might be appropriate strategies to improve media coverage of children affected by violence, and agreed that the Project should seek to produce training materials that could be used both at the entry point to journalism and in mid-career, and that representation would be much improved if media professionals were themselves committed to be increased participation in the media by children.

3.20 Since child protection and participation are matters rarely touched upon in vocational training, other than by reference to legal constraints on the reporting of children, it was felt that the materials developed as part of the Project should be made available for use on pre-entry vocational courses in colleges and schools of journalism. The biggest difficulty foreseen was in developing ways of engaging journalists in mid-career on the issue of children, media and violence. Materials should focus on concrete examples of specific dilemmas to encourage constructive debate within the workplace, and efforts should be made to provide current examples of good media practice when seeking to encourage more sensitive coverage of children affected by violence. Stress should be laid upon the importance of avoiding the use of inappropriate vocabulary, language, stereotypes and cultural assumptions.

3.21 Knowledge of observational and non-verbal communication techniques may assist media professionals to become more sensitive to children's feelings as well as improving their interview skills. Journalists should also be encouraged to think more carefully about their responsibilities and conduct in respect of children's rights - in particular over issues of privacy, identity and confidentiality. When seeking the permission of parents or carers for children to be interviewed, filmed or photographed, media professionals should seek to ensure that the consent they obtain is informed by an awareness of the potentially negative effects of widespread publicity as well as the positive benefits that may sometime ensue.

3.22 Journalists should be challenged to address these professional dilemmas. Their existing codes of conduct should be used as a starting point to encourage them to be aware of these responsibilities and to promote improvements in professional practice. The role of photographers and camera operators (image creators) should not be ignored.

3.23 It was also agreed that training in this field should highlight the need for journalists to appreciate the operational procedures and priorities of non-governmental organisations and other bodies responsible for children. They should welcome and co-operate with rather than attempt to subvert the efforts of carers to protect children from media demands.

Other matters

3.24 Efforts should be made to encourage caring organisations to formulate media strategies and policies, especially when dealing with sensitive issues. Sustained dialogue between child welfare organisations and the media is a prerequisite for successful collaboration in the best interests of the child when crises place children in the forefront of media attention. They should be willing to

engage with the media and develop directories of reliable experts who can assist the media to appreciate the particular problems of children affected by violence.

3.25 Journalists should be willing to explain to understand media processes more fully, in order to explain them to children and their carers understand better the terms of their participation. There is a quite distinct need, which is beyond the terms of reference of the Project, to develop media training strategies for both governmental and non-governmental agencies dealing with the care and protection of children. Many NGOs need help in recognising the value of children's participation in the media. They should seek to develop training strategies (radio workshops, production of their own newsletters) for children. This would facilitate more comprehensive and positive representations of children's lives and their points of view.

UK Seminars

a. Bristol

3.26 This Seminar took the form of a weekend workshop bringing together the journalists most closely associated with the development of training modules and strategies for the Project. Participants assessed the modules developed so far. A variety of drafts had been submitted and several others nearing completion. They welcomed the strong practical and participatory elements in these proposed training workshops, most of which were based on real-life ethical dilemmas. Examples included an introductory session on seeing the world as a child, representing children, children and violent crime, use of images, interviewing children, using statistics and finding alternative sources, HIV/Aids, child abuse and neglect. They also examined examples of good and bad practice collected from print and broadcast media that helped to illustrate the issues being raised. These included examples of children's rights coverage, different interview techniques, use of language and images, cultural, racial and gender stereotypes, issues of identification, privacy, permission and child protection.

Conclusions and recommendations

3.27 It was noted that materials should seek a balance of examples from all of the mass media outlets (print, radio and television). It was felt that an ideal number of participants in training sessions would be 20, allowing opportunities for collective exercises in groups of four or five groups, and that rooms used for training should mirror workplace conditions and not be laid out too formally. Training sessions should begin with a variety of short practical exercises aimed at breaking the ice and encouraging an informal and friendly atmosphere.

3.28 Trainers should be clear from the outset about the aims and expected outcomes of each practical workshop. Their main function should be as 'skill-sharers', to facilitate rather than to lecture, encouraging the free exchange of information and experiences, problem sharing and discussion. Time should be allowed for evaluation and participants should be encouraged to devise their own 'pocket guidelines' based upon experience of the training. The training sessions should be designed to foster a sensitivity to the consequences of media representation that could be quickly and easily communicated to colleagues.

3.29 It was felt that an important aspect of the training should be an inculcation of children's rights and what impact that awareness might have on media practices, rather than laying down strict rules about how particular stories should be handled. At the forefront of everybody's concern was the fact that 'in the real world' of media production, deadlines and 'house-styles' has a significant bearing upon how stories are gathered and presented. These constraints are difficult to over-ride.

b. Falmouth College of Arts

3.30 On behalf of the Project journalism trainer Charlotte Barry tested the final versions of the training modules with three groups of postgraduate journalism students enrolled on the Broadcast Journalism Training Council accredited courses at Falmouth College of Arts. These sessions were seen as an opportunity to introduce trainee journalists to the broader issue of children's rights and children's representation in the media as well as a means of testing project materials on a vocational course at a higher education institution.

3.31 Two 90-minute sessions were arranged for 38 students enrolled on an intensive 30-week bi-media course which covers radio and television production, journalism skills, law and public administration, together with management and media studies. The emphasis is on practical programme making. Around 98% succeed in finding a job at the end of the course. Recent trainees are working in independent local radio, regional television, BBC Online and BBC local radio. A three-hour session was run for 20 prospective TV researchers, producers, directors, and programme managers attending a new 30-week postgraduate diploma in broadcast television. This is a practical course covering all aspects of programme-making for digital television from news, sport and documentary to lifestyle, magazine and light entertainment.

3.32 During the sessions the students were introduced to the work of PressWise and the aims of the Project, received an outline of the UN Convention on Children's Rights, and discussed the need for children's voices to be heard, and the process of developing international guidelines for journalists. They also received a brief presentation on how the media sees children and how children see the media followed by discussion about stereotyping, the emotional appeal of children, and the importance of listening to children and seeking out their views.

3.33 Between them the students tested the modules dealing with visual images of children - on television and in the print media - addressing the question 'Which is more important - the child or the story?' Topics that arose in the trainer-led discussion included sensitive ways of interviewing children, choosing camera angles and close-ups, issues of identification, confidentiality and privacy, intrusion, sensationalism, public interest and consumer demand. Each student was given a copy of a journalist's summary of the UNCRC and the IFJ Guidelines on Reporting Children, with open discussion about the practicalities of matching aspiration with actuality.

Conclusions

3.34 These sessions were uniformly well-received and provided a short but valuable introduction to the ways in which journalists can cover children's experience of violence. The students were given the opportunity to consider ideas for best practice and to discuss some of the key dilemmas. For vocational reasons UK schools of journalism concentrate almost exclusively on the practical nature of the job, rather than on the ethics involved, and the positive response to the modules demonstrated the value of generating debate about ethical matters.

3.35 The majority of participants were in their mid-20s. A significant number still had a clear perception of childhood, which they felt would help them approach stories about children with particular sensitivity. Weighing up the balance between child protection and the public interest, they endorsed the importance of giving children a voice and suggested alternative ways of telling a child's story when privacy or confidentiality was an issue. Their willingness to respect children's needs so readily reflected both their comparative youth and their freedom from the legal, commercial, editorial and time-related pressures experienced by journalists in the workplace.

Recommendations

3.36 It was a challenge for the trainer to cover even the basic issues within 90 minutes, and even the longer session proved insufficient to cater adequately for the dialogue and debate generated. The students felt that at least one whole day should be devoted to such topics, underlining the importance of encouraging and allowing debate about ethical considerations, including children's rights, at the pre-entry stage of journalism, rather than waiting for occasional opportunities in mid-career. It is important to ensure that tutors on vocational courses have access to these modules, although consideration needs to be given to developing materials appropriate to trainees who are still relatively ignorant of media production processes.

Czech Seminar: Prague

3.37 The Czech seminar was held at the Independent Centre for Journalism in Prague, just before the World Trade Organisation summit in the city, and attracted the Director of Czech State

Radio as well as radio, TV and print journalists and press officers from national child welfare NGOs.

3.38 Mike Jempson of PressWise outlined the purpose of the Project and the Seminar and explained how training modules had been produced. He and Project trainer Arjum Wajid then led a lengthy discussion about the value of guidelines and professional codes of conduct based on the introductory modules.

3.39 The response was lively and enthusiastic, since these were issues that those present freely admitted they had not been asked to tackle before. There was broad agreement both about the need for such guidelines and the validity of the IFJ recommendations.

3.40 Although the Czech Child Protection Act 1999 defines children's right and protection measures, some sections of the Czech media appear to have interpreted the requirement to report cases of abuse to the authorities as a freedom to give maximum and often lurid publicity to cases of cruelty and sexual abuse, including blatant identification of children through photographs and film. Direct and 'jigsaw' (piecing together items of information from a variety of media sources) identification is not uncommon, even in cases of incest.

3.41 Little has been done on the topic as part of professional (degree level) or vocational training in the Czech Republic. Ethical concerns are touched upon briefly in formal courses leading to professional qualifications, and in short courses devised to meet the needs of working journalists. However none of the participants was aware of any specific training around children's rights. Participants indicated that there was growing concern about the use of explicit sexual imagery within the mainstream media and about the reporting of rape, child prostitution, and crime in general, particularly within the 'yellow' (privately owned tabloid) press. The only significant control mechanism to protect children appeared to be the 'watershed' on Czech TV, which prohibits extreme portrayals of violence and sexual activity before 22.00.

3.42 The afternoon was spent taking the participants through the modules dealing with images, with the assistance of Czech journalism trainer Milada Cholujova. Discussion centred upon the need to protect the identity of the children when covering stories about violence experienced by children. The certain fatalism about the impact of market-driven media became evident during these sessions which also demonstrated that the 'gallows humour' to be found in many a western newsroom is alive and well in the Czech Republic.

Conclusions

3.43 The Seminar revealed a genuine hunger for an opportunity to discuss the ethics of journalism, and opportunities for training on how to handle the more complex and sensitive issues that arise when covering abuse of children. As PressWise has noted elsewhere in Central and Eastern Europe, the interactive style of the training bring a special challenge to those who have been used to a more didactic, top-down approach to learning. There appear to be few occasions when such training is available, and the lack of funds for career development further limits the possibility of providing journalists with specialist courses. Participants had little to compare the modules with, and the project revealed a need that might be met by EU support for similar initiatives in the accession states over the coming years. (As the Project came to an end the closure of the Independent centre for Journalism was announced, following withdrawal of funding for the US.)

International Seminar: Brussels

3.44 This 'mid-term' Seminar brought together journalists and representatives of inter-governmental and non-governmental organisations from Belgium, Cyprus, the Czech Republic, France, Greece, Italy, Latvia, the Netherlands, Spain, Sweden and the United Kingdom. It was held in conjunction with an IFJ conference about the reporting of sexual tourism, providing a convenient synergy with issues at the heart of the Project.

3.45 There was a lengthy discussion about the problems of reporting about 'sex tourism' and child prostitution, which is often represented in the media as a problem of an in Asian countries (The Philippines, Sri Lanka and Thailand) but the evidence is that it is an increasing problem in Europe, especially in the former Soviet Union. The media in western Europe have preferred to treat it as an 'exotic' problem, and travel writers may allude to the 'allure' of certain destinations in consumer-oriented features without bothering to consider the inhumanity of such abuse or the economic and social causes.

3.46 Better liaison between the news, social affairs, foreign affairs and travel departments of media organisations was suggested as one way of ensuring that the issues is not dealt with in a superficial or prurient way. It was cited as another area in which closer co-operation between media professional and relevant NGOs would benefit children.

3.47 Among the points that NGOs present wished to emphasise was that the majority of abusers are men, most are local to areas where such abuse has become common, and many of the foreign abusers are not 'traditional paedophiles' but holiday-makers, businessmen, lorry drivers and military personnel on 'peace-keeping' duties, who see little wrong with a casual dalliance with under-age boys and girls (whom they regard as prostitutes first rather than as children), and salve their consciences by contributing money to the family and the local economy. These abused children are vulnerable to further exploitation by the media when being interviewed for articles and TV programmes in which they are often represented as (willing) victims rather than as 'survivors'.

3.48 An issue which it was felt the Project may be overlooking is the relationship between children and the Internet, a new medium which has proved to be a two edge-sword, bringing children into contact with an extraordinary range of information but at the same time leaving them prey to pornographers and paedophiles who can gain access to them in the privacy of their own homes. It is also a medium through which appalling images of violence and sexual exploitation of children can be disseminated. While it was acknowledged that this was not necessarily a journalistic issue nor a focal point for the Pilot Project, journalists present said they had made use of the facilities of the Internet to investigate abuse of children, by exposing paedophile and pornographic networks, and warning parents about the risks associated with unsupervised access to 'chat rooms' etc. There was a view that regulation of Internet content concerning illegal activities involving children should fall within the remit of media regulatory bodies in the future.

3.49 Some journalists had found themselves under suspicion from the police for investigating paedophile networks, and for being in possession of material disseminated through the World Wide Web. It was felt that investigative journalists need special protection when undertaking such work. They need to be able to trust and share information with other journalists, and to build safe communication links across country boundaries if such work is to be effective, and especially, as many present suspected, there are cover-ups to protect powerful people involved in the abuse of children (the Dutroux case, the so-called 'Ulrich CD', and paedophile networks in Latvia were mentioned). This might have to be the focus of a quite separate project.

Training patterns

3.50 Participants were given a general overview of vocational training practices in the various countries represented, demonstrating clearly that the issue of children's rights, reporting about violence and media ethics receive scant attention. The length and quality of training courses varied tremendously and in some countries there is little formal training. Even in countries like France and Sweden where there are more comprehensive training programmes, ethics is regarded as an 'add-on' to the primary purpose of preparing journalists for success in the jobs market. Nonetheless it was noted that the very public activities of NGOs concerned with child welfare has generated more interest among journalists in covering stories about the abuse and exploitation of children, even if some media professionals lack skill and sensitivity in dealing with the material.

3.51 It was generally felt that one key function of the Project, on completion, should be to excite interest among tutors on vocational courses to the potential of the Project modules as a means of introducing discussion about ethics and the representation of children.

The source of the problem

3.52 The main problem which encourages sensational and prurient coverage about the plight of children affected by violence, particularly among popular (tabloid/yellow press) newspapers and in some countries small commercial radio stations, is the fierce competition for readers or listeners.

3.53 Journalists have little or no power in the decision-making process, where market forces drive editors to adopt attitudes characterised by the remark passed by one senior editorial colleague to one of the participants "like pancakes, you make good stories which are tasty and will sell". In this atmosphere, participants admitted, there is very little room for balance, fairness, sensitivity and responsible journalism, or even truth. This rather dispiriting discussion gave rise to suggestions that the Project would be more effective if it could be extended to focus on alerting senior media executives to the importance of respecting children's rights.

3.54 As at the London seminar there was general agreement that the most significant form of awareness-raising could be in newsroom debate between colleagues, although 'children's issues' are often seen as 'soft topics' which are of little interest to news reporters. The fact that so many of those involved in the Project were women was remarked upon, along with the propensity for men to dominate senior executive roles in the media. 'Hard news', politics, economics and sport are still seen largely as a male domain, while social issues and children are regarded as topics 'best left to women'.

3.55 It was also felt that investigative reporters, again largely a male domain, need to be targeted since they will often tackle the more difficult issues such as the sexual and commercial exploitation of children. They may also be more receptive to the notion that they need support and advice. Similarly efforts should be made to alert travel writers to broader human rights issues, so that their coverage of holiday destinations includes some reference to the social conditions experienced by local populations, especially children living in poverty who are vulnerable to abuse.

Project modules

3.56 A more detailed session evaluated the wide range of examples assembled for use in the training modules. It was noted that the norms, traditions and laws of different societies and their media outlets vary considerably, and since the media professionals tend to deal with the immediate, it is important that trainers in each country should seek to gather recent examples of good and bad practice if they wish to engage colleagues in debate. Nonetheless it was agreed that the general principles contained within the UNCRC and the IFJ Guidelines provide a workable framework for debate among journalists, since the ethical issues underpinning the training modules would generally be recognised as a basis for responsible journalistic practice.

3.57 Largely for that reason it was agreed that the modules should focus on general principles to alert journalists to the fact that children have internationally recognised rights (to which all but two of the world's governments have signed up). The module should focus on the ethical considerations that flow from the standards outlined in the UNCRC. By using case studies which had hit international headlines (like the Elian Gonzales story [US/Cuba], Dunblane [UK], and Sierra Leone) common messages and debates could be promoted, and trainers in any country using the materials would have models around which to assemble topical local examples.

Conclusions

3.58 It was agreed that the basic structure and intent of the modules works well - concentrating on awareness-raising, knowledge-testing and debate. Although a variety of examples from participating countries were discussed although few were tabled for inclusion in the modules. It

was felt that many of the original (UK) examples provided a useful basis for comparison and debate. Some found the challenging and interactive nature of the modules unusual but effective methods of engaging interest in the topics.

3.59 There was an acknowledgement that each module should be able to 'stand alone', and trainers should be able to 'pick and mix' given the time constraints often involved. Few felt that working journalists would be willing to give up more than a morning, afternoon or evening to engage in such training sessions, and curriculum pressures in vocational training courses also mean that it is important to offer a variety of methods of presentation.

3.60 Several of those present expressed the view that the reporting of ethnic diversity and gender issues in their countries give rise to similar conflicts about how to apply more sensitive (ethical) approaches to stories when the news agenda or commercial imperatives demand more sensational forms of treatment.

French Seminar: Paris

3.61 The French Seminar took place at the new Press Centre in central Paris and attracted 39 participants from print, radio, and television as well as representatives from NGO's concerned with media representation of children affected by violence.

3.62 Project manager Mike Jempson outlined its purpose and explained how the training modules had been produced. Homayra Sellier of Innocence en Danger, spoke about the particular problems created by new media with children able to receive images and invitations to engage in potentially damaging interaction with strangers through the Internet.

3.63 A wide-ranging debate followed which centred largely upon the need for journalists to bring issues of the physical and sexual abuse to the surface via the media, while at the same time respecting the privacy and identity of the children affected.

3.64 Journalists present commented about the difficulties they experienced in investigations about child abuse, with one facing court action for taking up the issue of the 'Ulrich CD' and associated documents which had revealed the existence of an international network of paedophile abusers. There was concern that this might indicate collusion at a high level, where public figures are protected by both law and convention that the personal details of people's private lives are not a matter for public consumption through the media.

3.66 There was debate about the most appropriate way to cover instances of extreme forms of abuse of children, and an acknowledgement that, as elsewhere, children tend to feature in the news only when they are affected by tragedy.

3.67 It was also indicated that such issues rarely surface in vocational training courses, where ethics is touched upon tangentially. Although French journalists have had their own codes of conduct since 1938 (a more recent version was adopted in 1973) there was a view that most journalists are not really aware of them. These codes make no specific mention of children.

Conclusions

3.68 The challenge in France appears to be to bring children and their protection to the forefront of the media agenda, and to ensure that regulations and laws designed with a laudable purpose in mind are not used to prevent proper debate about child protection issues.

3.69 In discussions with journalists it was clear that modules of the kind devised by the Project are unlikely to feature on training courses in either private or public institutions. Nor are ethics seen as a priority for the media unions which concentrate on industrial matters. Special efforts will need to be made to encourage use of the modules.

3.60 Meanwhile there was enthusiasm for the idea of supportive networks linking investigative journalists and non-governmental organisations to explore and expose the extent of child abuse, and to investigate the role of the Internet as a new medium through which children can be corrupted.

Spanish Seminar: Madrid

3.61 Twenty-five media professionals and representatives of child welfare organisations, including the Ombudsperson for Children, and members of a youth group, took part in the Seminar, which was opened by project manager Mike Jempson. He explained the functions of PressWise and said that purpose of the Project was to help and educate journalists to work and inform correctly about the more distressing issues that affect children and society.

3.62 Those present admitted that news reports or features on children only appear in the media when they relate to scandal, abuse or mistreatment. There is very little coverage of positive stories or other issues relating to children.

3.63 There was lengthy discussion about the use of images of the child, and the fact that the creation of the office of Ombudsperson for children has provided the media with a focal point for advice on how to handle difficult stories in which children at risk might otherwise be damaged by identification, the use of their image, and other revelations about their private lives.

3.64 Journalists from national newspapers, radio and television including Isabel Serrano (ABC), Manuel Marlasca, Antonio Baena (Antena 3) and media studies lecturer Xavier Ovach, were generally critical of their industry's attitude towards representations of children. They admitted that for some time after the end of dictatorship there had been something of a 'free-for-all' in the media with sensational coverage of sensitive issues, there have been improvements in recent years. Now it is less common for the images of children in problematic stories to be used, and they are more likely to be identified only by their initials. This has been a consequence of legal and regulatory changes, the intervention of the Public Prosecutor, the creation of the office of Ombudsperson for Children and campaigns by NGOs, as well as greater awareness of children's rights among media professionals.

3.65 Nonetheless they were agreed that more needs to be done to improve vocational training around the issue of children and violence and children's rights, as well as to encourage the appointment of specialists to handle stories involving children and bring the child's view into mainstream media.

3.66 Speaking as deputy to the Children's Ombudsperson for Madrid, Carmen González, said that her office was frequently approached with complaints about media coverage of children, and violence, but also received calls from the media themselves seeking advice about the most appropriate way to protect the rights and privacy of children in the news.

3.67 Particular concern was expressed about the negative influence of television of children's behaviour - there had been instances of an 'echo effect' after stories about juvenile suicides which had persuaded journalists to limit the occasions when such cases are reported. Fourteen-year-old Libertad Camino Alcocer criticised the media for colluding in the promotion of extremely thin fashion models, which could contribute to anorexia amongst young people. A member of the youth group EKI which addressed the European Parliament in 2000 about children's views and rights, she also spoke out against the amount of violence on television, especially in programmes broadcast before the 22.00 watershed, and the risks of imitation by young people on whom television is a major influence.

3.68 Those present acknowledged it is the duty of journalists to inform society about violence against children in an effort to encourage an atmosphere in which the public speaks out against abuse when it occurs. However the commercial imperatives of the media, and the lack of a real understanding of children's rights, has meant that the search for a compelling headline or image

can over-ride all other considerations. An additional conflict arises between the right to privacy of the child over the right of the public to information, especially about harm being done to children.

3.69 Ilya Topper of Save the Children, said the media's demands for 'attractive' images to sell stories are in conflict with the ethical codes under which NGO staff operate. As a result, press officers live a daily struggle attempting to balance conflicting demands and responsibilities if society is to be informed about children's issues, and the work and campaigns of NGOs. One solution may be to seek agreement between media and childcare professionals about codes of conduct to protect children.

3.70 Javier Urra, the Children's Ombudsperson for Madrid, insisted that it is journalists who are making the public aware of children's rights, but warned that news coverage needs to be more balanced, and more research is required about the impact of news on children. He stressed the need for the media and the public to hear what children had to say.

Conclusions

3.71 The Seminar gave support to the view, expressed in the training modules, that those publishing news and information about children should take into account that children have rights; that special attention must be paid to their development, and consideration should always be given to the possible consequences to children of the publication of information or pictures of them. It was felt that more research is needed into which types of news or information are harmful to children.

3.72 Although there is now more awareness about the rights of the child there are still insufficient specialist journalists covering their stories. There was recognition of the importance of introducing sensitivity training about the rights of children and other ethical matters in vocational training both for new journalists and those seeking mid-career development. The type of training envisaged by the Project could help to produce more specialists able to create awareness in society about both children's rights and the mistreatment of children.

Chapter 4: EVALUATION, CONCLUSIONS AND RECOMMENDATIONS

Evaluation

4.01 The Project managers from Bristol and Brussels met five times during the course of the Project to assess progress and discuss issues that had arisen from Project seminars, and maintained more frequent contact by phone and email. The momentum of the Project was kept up by regular contact between the Director and Administrator for PressWise and members of the Project team in person and by phone and email.

4.02 Essentially the structure of the Project took the form of a constant evaluative process. Trainers and researchers took it in turns to examine, comment upon and assist in the revision of their colleagues work, and each Seminar provided an opportunity to reassess the effectiveness of the modules and their messages. Reports were prepared from each seminar and core members of the Project team discussed these in order to establish priorities for the next phase.

4.03 At the outset the Project had an extremely broad brief - to consider ways of improving coverage of children affected by violence, and of sensitising media professionals to the impact of media representations of violence upon children. Given the wide range of media now accessible to children, and the many different genres through which violence is portrayed, an early decision had to be taken about the precise focus of the training.

4.04 During the process it became clear the primary consideration was to alert media professionals to children's rights as a prerequisite to more sensitive approaches to coverage of violence against children. As a consequence, it was felt, there would be greater awareness about the significance to children of depictions of violence in the media.

4.05 Verbal and written feedback from all the training Seminars indicated that the Project was moving in the right direction. However, in private discussions it was clear that, as media professional sensitive to criticism and, in some cases, as parents, those participating in the Project were also concerned about public anxieties about the levels of violence, especially on television, and its potential negative influence on young people. This is a subject about which there are widely differing views and conflicting research. To address this issue the detailed research into current thinking and findings in Europe and the USA was commissioned, giving added value to the Project.

4.06 The Project itself became a running debate among the participants, with messages spreading out through contacts in each of the participating countries, but the focussed remained on the production of effective modules that would have meaning for working journalists everywhere.

4.07 At each stage those participating in the Project and the Seminars were encouraged to provide feedback and advice about how best to restructure the training modules to meet the needs of the target 'audiences'. The results were evaluated via verbal and written feedback from participants at the different seminars, and disseminated immediately to members of the Project team enabling them to modify the training materials in advance of each new session.

4.08 Through this consultative process it became clear that rather than concentrate solely on the professional dilemmas thrown up by specific current 'case studies', the ultimate aim of improving coverage of children affected by violence, and sensitising journalists to the impact of media representations of violence upon children, was more likely to be achieved by developing modules which introduced journalists to the broader issue of children's rights and their status in society. This concept allowed for the formulation of 'universal' modules to sensitise journalists to children as people with human and civil human rights rather than as 'special cases'.

4.09 These consultations also cast doubts on the value of relying too heavily on historical examples, since the 'media agenda' is so fluid, legislative and regulatory frameworks are subject

to change, and so little attention has been paid within the industry to the implications of a 'rights-based' approach to ethics. They also indicated that thought will need to be given to engaging senior editorial executives and technicians (especially camera operators and picture editors) if there is to be significant change in the ways stories about violence are presented.

4.10 It became apparent that the modules should remain drafts which highlight the issues of representation and participation, using internationally recognised examples of extreme circumstances to bring home messages about the use of children's images and their own perceptions of the world. The final versions of the training modules were devised to be easily adapted across different cultures and to take account of differing legal structures and professional practices. They provide future trainers with the opportunity and flexibility to introduce their own country and culture-specific examples of good and bad practice to more effectively engage media professionals locally.

4.11 The Brussels Seminar proved a useful exercise in assessing the possibilities of expanding the range of countries to be covered within Europe, and provided a helpful opportunity to obtain feedback from representatives of media unions, non-governmental organisations, and international agencies involved in children's rights.

4.12 The in-country Seminars confirmed the Project team's concern that insufficient time and attention is allocated both to the reporting of children and consideration of broader ethical issues on vocational training courses as well as within in-service (industry-based) training. This in turn gave rise to a view that the project would have more success if it were extended over a longer period, and incorporated efforts to engage the interests and sympathies of senior media executives.

4.13 Each training Seminar in all four countries was attended by working journalists and other media professionals who played an active part in the proceedings. Trainee broadcast journalists and television trainees attended Seminars in the UK to test the final versions. This direct engagement of journalists lends special authority to the final product, and their contribution to the Project should ensure that it has relevance and impact when the materials are disseminated.

4.14 As an exercise in collaboration, the Project has succeeded in disseminating positive messages among print and broadcasting journalists and child welfare agencies about the importance of the media's role in the acknowledgement of children's rights and the negative impact of sensational coverage of violence.

4.15 Altogether more than 80 journalists from 11 countries working in all sectors of the media industry were directly involved in the Project together with over 50 representatives from non-media organisations concerned with child welfare.

4.16 The original shape of the Project proved difficult to sustain however, in large part due to the fact that it had been designed to operate as a collaborative exercise with working journalists whose deadlines and priorities are determined by circumstances beyond the control of the Project team who were themselves part-timers with other professional commitments.

4.17 Thus the essential strength of the Project - being rooted in the media industry - also proved to be one its weaknesses. Despite initial interest in the Project from media unions in the participating countries, for instance, it became evident that organisations primarily concerned with protecting their members' industrial interests are not always the most suitable vehicles through which to promote new forms of training around ethical issues. There appeared to be some reluctance to expend time and energy on what is perceived as a marginal or relatively minor issue, and this resistance to the substance of the Project merely served to emphasise its importance.

4.18 External pressures and priorities affected the availability of individual working journalists and led to delays which put the Project timetable at risk, requiring the rescheduling of Seminars and placing additional organisational strains upon the key partners. Each of the training sessions held in the Czech Republic, France and Spain took place later than originally intended due to organisational problems. Pragmatic decisions were required about how to proceed. Plans for a second round had to be dropped because of time constraints.

4.19 It became clear that it would be more effective to work with committed individuals linked other organisations in each of the partner countries: the Centre for Independent Journalism in the Czech Republic, Innocence in Danger in France, and Save the Children in Spain. It was also clear that it would not be possible, as originally intended, to draw journalists from all media sectors and corners of each country to two-day Seminars along the lines of the launch model. Ironically this centralised the administration of the Project while cutting costs in the partner countries, allowing the Project to meet its target well below the original budget.

4.20 Nonetheless, for all the difficulties, this has proved to be an enormously valuable Pilot Project which has helped to identify a very specific area of neglect within vocational training for journalists but which has also that helped to widen media professionals' awareness of the impact of media coverage on children affected by violence.

Dissemination

4.21 Information about the Project and dissemination of the results will take place through the internal communication networks of European media unions, the web-sites of participating bodies, and via the electronic communication networks of journalism training organisations in participating countries.

4.22 A copy of the printed report will be distributed to media organisations, industry training bodies individual journalists and children's rights organisations on request. PressWise can provide interested parties with access to a substantial amount of background material, including trainers' notes.

4.23 Both PressWise and the IFJ are well placed to meet requests for materials and trainers since both operate internationally, are focal points for enquiries about the media industry, and are in regular contact with training institutions.

4.24 Recognition of the European Commission's contribution to this pilot project appears prominently on project materials, the final report and will feature as part of any electronic promotion.

Conclusions and recommendations

4.25 The Project has succeeded in its basic aim of preparing and testing training modules for media professionals in the EU and one of the accession states, and to assist them in handling stories involving children and violence in a sensitive and responsible manner.

4.26 It has also sowed the seeds for the development of a network of journalists-trainers across Europe who can assist in the 'spreading the word' about the value of sensitivity training about children's rights within the mass media, especially in relation to the issue of violence.

4.27 It has built links with NGOs working in the field of children's rights, and sought to encourage more collaborative activity with and between media professionals in 'the best interests of the child'.

4.28 Elements of the training materials have already been put to good use among journalists from Armenia, Georgia, India, Kosovo, Macedonia, Moldova, Montenegro, Romania, Serbia and Slovakia at no cost to the Project in the course of other training contracts undertaken by PressWise.

4.29 The Project has also identified numerous areas for further elaboration of its aims and themes. Representatives of media organisations, industry training bodies, international agencies and specialist children's organisations in each of the participating countries highlighted the need to introduce more training on ethical issues in media training courses in colleges and universities as well as within in-service training. Journalists themselves indicated the need for more support and advice for those who find themselves isolated when they champion children's rights and challenge the system or carry out in-depth investigations. And the Project also exemplified the value of far greater co-operation and co-ordination media professionals and organisations working in the field of children's rights.

4.30 The Project proved to be more challenging than had been anticipated, but overall it succeeded well despite the difficulties encountered. It was handled systematically and completed under budget, and has produced material that should have lasting value in raising awareness within the media and the general public about the issues at its core.

4.31 The Project team believe that those seeking to employ the modules should give special consideration to the possibility of incorporating at least one additional session featuring contributions from child psychologists or psychotherapists in order to introduce their valuable insights into the debate. Efforts should also be made to encourage male journalists to appreciate the importance of understanding the child's point of view.

4.32 The Project team also believe that the Commission should seriously consider supporting an extension of this Pilot Project over the next three years. In particular they recommend that the achievements of the Project would be consolidated if the following matters were to be addressed:

- a. The Modules need to be tested and developed in other EU countries, and especially in the accession states where there is both a hunger and a need for awareness raising among media professionals about the media's responsibilities in the field of child protection.
- b. The Modules lend themselves to adaptation to cover the issue of media representations of women, domestic violence and rape.
- c. There is a need to alert media executives to the importance of appreciating the rights of children and women the impact of representations of violence.
- d. There is a need to foster appreciation of the importance of media ethics and awareness of the issues dealt with by the project among vocational training institutions throughout (the expanded) European Union.
- e. It would be extremely valuable to organise training programmes for photographers and camera operators.
- f. There is an evident need to build networks between journalists and non- governmental organisations across European border to improve the quality coverage about abuses of children's rights.

Chapter 5: FINANCIAL REPORT

5.01 The attached financial statement shows that the Project has been completed for about 70% of the anticipated Budget.

5.02 This is a direct consequence of three unanticipated changes in the project schedule:

- a. by working with NGOs at relatively short notice with NGOs in the participating countries, and holding one-day Seminars attended largely by people within the immediate catchment area, costs were significantly reduced;
- b. by seeking to achieve synergy with other IFJ activities, it proved possible to significantly reduce the travel and accommodation costs for the international seminar held in Brussels;
- c. because it became impracticable to organise follow-up workshops in each of the participating countries, costs were further reduced.

Mike Jempson
Project Manager
Bristol, 28 March 2001

This project was funded under the European Commission Daphne Initiative which sponsors projects dealing with violence against women and children.

Children, Violence and the Media in an Expanding Europe - Appendices

PressWise/IFJ European Pilot Training Project under the EC Daphne Initiative

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Compiled by Charlotte Barry & Mike Jempson

1. INTRODUCTION

The PressWise Trust is an educational charity concerned with media ethics. This guidance document is intended to help trainers in the preparation of materials and the development of modules for PressWise 'best practice' workshops for media professionals. They draw attention to gender, cultural and child-sensitive issues, and are designed to ensure that PressWise workshops and training materials themselves reflect the Trust's commitment to high standards of journalism and to equal opportunities.

PressWise trainers are expected to place accuracy and the defence of human rights at the heart of their work, and to ensure that their language, approach and materials do not discriminate against people on the grounds of age, ethnic or cultural identity, disability, gender, religion, or sexual orientation.

Wherever possible PressWise trainers should challenge stereotypes and encourage inquiry, and draw upon published journalistic material to illustrate both best and worst practice. It is important that their training methods do not undermine the key messages we are trying to communicate. The primary objective of this document is to assist journalist-trainers and other media professionals to avoid pitfalls arising from the use of inappropriate images, language, stereotypes and cultural assumptions when developing stories involving children, young people and women.

This guidance should be seen as a summary rather than an exhaustive checklist. It will benefit from your experience, comments and additions. Feel free to query any aspect with which you are uncomfortable, and please pass on any suggestions and/or comments to PressWise to enable us to develop the guidelines further.

2. APPROACH

In compiling this guide we have adopted the basic principles of the United Nations Convention on the Rights of the Child (UNCRC) which defines a 'child' as an individual under the age of 18. The UNCRC recognises that children should enjoy equal status with adults as fully-fledged members of the human family, and emphasises that they are full citizens at all levels of society - not just 'people in the making'.

a. Media coverage of children

Ideally, media coverage of children should extend beyond specific stories or programmes about children's needs, issues and achievements. Journalists and programme-makers must be prepared to move beyond this 'pigeon-hole' perspective. Instead, an awareness of children's rights needs to be integrated into all writing, editing and production. This awareness should underpin stories and angles that are not obviously about or directly aimed at young people.

The examples and practical exercises employed in training sessions can be used to emphasise this difference in approach. For instance, a report on an increase in smoking among girls is a specific story about children's health. A report on a tax cut on cigarettes is a finance story that could include an angle about the effect on young people's health.

b. Participation

Children and young people can be an important source for the media. They have as much right to be heard as any other members of society and are capable of speaking on their own behalf. They can present a different perspective and a fresh turn of phrase, and should not be regarded merely as source of 'light relief'. Journalists should seek children out, quote them in their own words, listen to their views and value their opinions.

- *Does the story example you've chosen use any children, young people or women as a source?*
- *Did you ask any children, young people or women what they thought of your choice of example?*
- *By using them as a source or example, are you putting them at risk or marginalising them in any way?*
- *Did you take account of any cultural barriers that inadvertently might lead you to overlook certain groups or individuals?*

c. Asking permission

In some countries the law and codes of practice make it clear that appropriate permission should be sought at all times when children and young people are photographed, filmed or interviewed. It's also important that children should understand fully the consequences of appearing in pictures or interviews.

d. Privacy and identification of individuals

Legal constraints and privacy codes exist to ensure that journalists preserve children's anonymity if identifying them might cause them further harm.

e. Confidentiality of sources

It is also generally accepted that journalists and programme makers have a duty to protect their sources of information when investigating sensitive issues such as exploitation or injustice.

- *To what extent are these concepts recognised or accepted elsewhere? What laws and codes of practice exist in other countries? How will this be reflected in the way you present your material?*
- *Are these issues respected within your own story examples or practical exercises? Where possible, have you asked the people involved whether they mind you reproducing the story in this way?*

f. Definitions of childhood

Age limits aimed at protecting children vary from state to state. These variations affect hazardous forms of work, criminal responsibility, death penalty, category of imprisonment, recruitment into armed forces, age of consent and marriageable age. There can be marked gender disparity.

- *Are you satisfied that you have a clear working definition in your own mind of what a 'child' is and where you draw the line between child, young person/adolescent and adult? Are you being consistent throughout your training package?*
- *Are you intending to agree a working definition with trainees at the start of each training session? Might it be necessary to adopt a universal definition such as that contained in the United Nations Convention on the Rights of the Child?*

g. Inclusion

Children of both sexes can be forgotten or excluded. This can happen when they are in institutions or living and/or working on the streets. They might be in hidden forms of exploitative work. They could be unaccompanied refugees, or have been bought and sold across frontiers. Children with disabilities face particular prejudices that can make them 'invisible'.

h. Girls

Consider when it may be more appropriate to use examples that refer to the special circumstances of girls. Boys and girls do not face similar problems/possibilities in every setting. The dowry and domestic work are traditionally associated with the girl child; opportunities for boys may be greater in the field of sport. Neither situation is likely to change unless attention is drawn to it.

Just because girls are ignored or marginalised within a community or society does not mean that they should be similarly invisible in the media.

i. Children as victims

Children can be portrayed as mute victims of violence, whose misfortune is described by adults. Sometimes they are used merely as nameless 'picture opportunities'. If appropriate, the media should give these children an opportunity to speak for themselves.

j. Children who are parents

Children or young people can become parents themselves. Both parent and child are entitled to have their rights as children or adolescents respected.

- *Do your examples and practical exercises take account of these issues?*

3. LANGUAGE

Journalists know that language is a potent tool. It sets a 'tone' or context in which opinions are formed and it provides a series of labels by which people, events and ideas are known and therefore perceived.

It is important to encourage appropriate use of language among trainees and to pay special attention to the use of words and phrases in the production of training materials and presentations.

In the areas of gender, cultural and child-related sensitivity, it is equally important not to buy into the dismissive 'politically correct' debate without reflection.

a. Jargon

Journalists are expected to translate official and unofficial jargon into everyday language.

- *Have you inadvertently repeated the jargon of governments, international organisations and activists in training materials or sessions?*
- *For example, have you avoided the jargon of children's rights? Would it be appropriate for 'child rights' to become children's rights, 'child labour' to become working children or children at work, 'child refugees' to become refugee children, and so on?*

b. Acronyms and abbreviations

Journalists are expected to spell out or explain acronyms and abbreviations the first time they use them in a story or programme.

- *In the context of children's rights, people are not necessarily familiar with the meaning of UNICEF, or the CRC, or the UNHCR. Can we really expect people to know what 'Beijing' means as a shorthand term in the specific context of the women's movement?*
- *Acronyms mean different things in different countries. In Switzerland, for instance, BBC is not the British Broadcasting Corporation but a large engineering company.*
- *Do your training materials take such things into account?*

c. Generalisations

Generalisations about children or groups of children can be patronising and insulting and can trivialise serious issues. Victims are not small, dependent, trusting or innocent sufferers who are unable to act, think or speak for themselves.

- *Have you used adjectives only when they are accurate and necessary?*
- *Have you generalised for the sake of simplicity? For instance, made sweeping references to 'street children', 'child prostitutes' or 'teenage mothers'?*

d. Stereotypes

Images of children in the media become distorted when extreme descriptive labels are used to exploit their emotional appeal.

Children are not 'little angels', or for that matter, 'little devils'. They are not necessarily innocent, vulnerable, loveable, courageous and in need of protection. Neither are they ignorant, wild, aggressive or out of control.

Adolescents are young people balanced between childhood and adulthood. They are not automatically troublesome teenagers, rowdy delinquents, ill-mannered youths or drug-addicted tearaways.

- *Do your materials unwittingly reinforce any of these sorts of stereotypes?*

e. Disabled children

In some cultures, figurative use of terms like 'blind', 'deaf' or 'dumb' are considered pejorative and can cause offence to disabled people.

- *Have you checked what words and phrases you can use in specific contexts to describe children with disabilities?*
- *Have you taken care to avoid making value judgements about their capabilities and quality of life?*
- *Have you asked the children themselves?*

f. Cultural assumptions

Cultural assumptions can obscure what you are trying to say.

- *Have you made your materials as culturally neutral as possible?*
- *In your examples, have you avoided concepts that belong to a specific culture? For instance, stories about Christmas or the Millennium celebrations that have little relevance in a non-Christian context.*

g. Forms of personal address

Methods of addressing people by name vary enormously throughout the world. Different levels of formality exist as well.

- *Have you checked people's first names and titles?*
- *How informally do they want to be addressed/referred to?*

h. The '-isms' and 'phobias

Sexism, ageism, racism, homophobia, xenophobia. Run a check through training materials - sometimes it is the familiar that most easily slip through the net.

- *Have you avoided gender-specific terms?*
- *Have you been sufficiently sensitive to multi-ethnic issues?*

i. Translation

We are trying to develop training materials that can be used in a variety of language settings. When compiling modules consider whether they contain colloquial terms the meaning of which may be misrepresented in translation.

4. USE OF IMAGES

Journalists know that pictures have an enormous influence on public perception. Television footage of children affected by famine, in institutions, fleeing from persecution or caught up in armed conflict can leave a lasting mental image.

a. Juxtaposition of images

Insensitive juxtaposition of pictures can cause even more damage to people already traumatised by events. The day after the Dunblane shooting tragedy many newspaper front pages carried a portrait of gunman Thomas Hamilton 'framed' by smiling photographs of the primary schoolchildren he'd killed. Grieving parents complained about this visual proximity.

Both PressWise and the charity Action on Child Exploitation have condemned the UK popular press for reporting and condemning child abuse in one part of a newspaper, while displaying sexualised images of young girls elsewhere in the same paper.

b. Sexualised images of women and girls

At times the naked female form is used spuriously to illustrate news and features - particularly health, fitness, fashion and beauty topics.

In 1997, UK designer Vivienne Westwood was criticised for using catwalk models as young as 13 to display her provocative, adult fashion collection.

c. Dehumanising images

The media often uses disturbing pictures of diseased, injured, starving, dead or dying children to illustrate violent or disastrous events in developing countries. A voiceover, caption or adult interview may accompany these. The children may not be identified as individuals or offered the chance to speak.

Many journalists and aid workers believe they should use such vivid images to 'tell the story like it is,' even if the way in which they're used can invade children's privacy, harm their dignity and reinforce the sense of distance from events.

For example, UNICEF, the United Nations Children's Fund, caused controversy when it used a graphic picture of a severely disabled child in an advert appealing for donations.

- *How have you approached the use of images in your materials and examples?*

5. INVISIBLE ELEMENTS

Some issues arise so often in the discourse of international agencies, non-governmental organisations and activist groups that we can become inured to them. This can lead us to make assumptions, to neglect broader questions inherent in these issues or even to drop a specific issue altogether because it seems so worn and hackneyed.

These 'invisible' elements cannot be taken for granted. Trainees may be aware of some of the issues, but we can't assume they have an intimate, working knowledge.

a. Children at work

Journalists should be aware of the social, political and economic circumstances in which children go out to work.

The issue of child labour encompasses physical violence, fear, mental abuse, coercion, trafficking and slavery, including debt bondage. It can involve parents, the wider family, local employers and multinational companies.

In 1997, UNESCO estimated that 400 million children under the age of 14 went out to work in developing countries. Nearly three-quarters were involved in agriculture.

Many children go out to work or are employed within the family for reasons of economic survival, rather than financial exploitation. In 1998, Bulgaria's Human Development Report estimated that one third of all Bulgarian children were not enrolled in school because they were 'employed' in the family economy.

b. Sexual abuse - myths and facts

The term 'paedophilia' fosters the idea that sex abusers are sick strangers or evil maniacs rather than family members or people we know. In nine out of ten cases in the UK, the child knows the abuser, who is a member of the family, extended family or stepfamily, according to research by the British Psychological Society.

Not all sex abusers are adult men. Nearly one third are under 18. Up to one third of child abusers are female. Not all victims are girls; about one third are boys.

c. Sexual exploitation

The terms 'child prostitute' and 'child sex model' can undermine the rights of a young person who may have been forced violently into prostitution or the pornography industry.

The UK Children's Society for instance, which works with young prostitutes, emphasises that sexual abuse on the streets should not be treated differently from that at home.

d. Children in custody

Adults are not the only threat to children held in custody or in conflict with the law. Other children can be sexually abusive or physically violent towards them, as can those responsible for their care. Juvenile justice systems may not protect the child in their charge.

e. Domestic violence

Violence in the home is not just an adult matter; it can harm children both physically and psychologically. Both boys and girls are at risk. Not all aggressors in the family are adult men.

f. Violence against women

Women and girls face specific risk from acts of domestic violence committed by men. Violence or the threat of it, particularly at home, limits the choices open to them in a society already dominated by male values. It is an accepted form of social control and dominance.

Domestic violence destroys their health, disrupts their lives and narrows the scope of their activity. It erodes their self-confidence and self-esteem. The social, cultural or religious frameworks that sanction it are worth a second look - not just in distant countries.

In 1998, over half of all women murdered in Ireland were killed by their husbands or partners, according to the European Women's Lobby.

g. Private matter or public concern?

Huge discrepancies exist in the way domestic violence is treated from country to country. Provision of emergency shelters and long-term refuges vary considerably. Legal services, for example restrictive orders and advice centres, can also be very diverse.

This stems partly from different legislative parameters surrounding the family, the definition of a 'child', ownership laws and the overall legal and social frameworks that sanction the aggression.

h. Statistics on domestic violence

Crime figures under-represent the incidence of violence against women and girls - particularly battery and sexual assault in a domestic setting. A significant number of incidents are not officially reported.

Be wary of accepting statistics and official reports at face value. Take a hard look at where they come from, how they were compiled, what they mean, and where possible get an alternative viewpoint.

i. Traditional practices

Women and girls suffer physical and psychological damage from coercive practices rooted in culture and tradition. These include female circumcision, female infanticide and abortion, forced marriage and dowry deaths.

In India, one in seven women is burned in a dowry-related dispute, according to a United Nations Violence Against Women report.

The 1997 Progress of Nations report estimated that 6,000 girls are genitally mutilated each day.

- *Should media coverage of such practices try to balance cultural sensitivity with the human rights issue? For instance, is the phrase 'female circumcision' synonymous with female genital mutilation?*

h. Lack of empowerment

Many women who experience domestic violence continue to be economically dependent on male partners. They and their children continue to be at risk. Migrant women, for instance, may have no legal status. The issues surrounding independence, power and fundamental human rights put stories of domination and violence into a broader context.

j. Armed conflict

Women and girls are especially vulnerable to sexual violence, exploitation and abuse from all sides during armed conflict. They can also be at risk from 'helpers' such as refugee camp leaders and 'peace-keeping' troops.

k. Rape as stigma

Rape victims may be unwilling to testify to their ordeal because they fear stigma or being socially ostracised. In central Africa, Tutsi women who bore children as a result of rape by Rwandan troops have suffered social exclusion.

l. Rape as a weapon

During the war in Bosnia at least 20,000 women were raped by Serbian army units in 'rape camps' as part of a systematic military strategy, the United Nations estimates. Rape was used as a deliberate weapon of policy by Serbian forces and paramilitary units in Kosovo, according to Human Rights Watch.

m. Children recruited as soldiers

Children are not always passive victims of armed conflict and they are not necessarily civilians. Young boys and adolescents are recruited, often unwillingly, into paramilitary activity.

n. Refugees

More than half the 22 million refugees in the world are children and young people under 18. They are not simply part of a broad category of people considered 'vulnerable'. They have a right to structured activities and education as well as food, water, shelter and medical help.

Refugee Kosovo Albanian children interviewed by BBC Newsround in Macedonia in 1999 said that most of all, apart from their homes, they missed their toys, friends, school and books.

o. Strategy of elimination

The United Nations points out that refugees are no longer incidental casualties of war but specific targets in an effort to eliminate 'tomorrow's enemy'. They are increasingly at risk from mines, sniper fire and shelling.

p. Loss of identity

As well as experiencing the trauma of displacement, refugee children can become separated from their parents. They can lose their identity in terms of nationality, name and/or family relations. Children born to refugees may be stateless.

Inter-country adoption and the sale and illegal trafficking of children may mean they lose all trace of their parentage and even their ethnic, linguistic and cultural origins. If removed from their adoptive family or culture, they can be deprived of their identity yet again.

q. Asylum-seekers

Asylum-seekers face hostility and prejudice when spurious distinctions are made between 'genuine' asylum-seekers and economic migrants that are deemed to be exploiting another country's welfare system. They can easily be marginalised or singled out in media coverage, especially if they look 'different'.

B. The role and responsibilities of journalists

Background Paper for Children, Violence and the Media in an Expanding Europe Launch Seminar, London, February 24-25, 2000. Prepared by Bettina Peters (Director, IFJ Project Division)

1. Introduction

These days there are plenty of people ready to speak about journalism and on behalf of journalists:

- Politicians tell us how we ought to behave, what we should report and the way we should report it, particularly when it comes to journalism about them and their own public image;
- Media organisations - the publishers and broadcast moguls of the modern global industry - tell us to focus on the business of journalism and to concentrate primarily on reportage that sells;
- Pressure groups and NGOs, lobbyists within civil society, child rights groups, trade unions, churches, and people in favour of narrow cultural interests call for partisan journalism which reflects the priorities and issues which they think are the most important for society.

All of these interest groups, working within media and outside it, share a common view that journalists and media are opinion creators able to shape social development within society and, very often, to do so in a negative way.

Especially in the Western industrialised world, the debate on child rights and the media focuses on the negative influences of television and the internet on children. Media are perceived as creating opinion.

I want to challenge this point of view. Public opinion is a force shaped and determined by many factors - work, family, community, the daily experience of people living in society. It cannot be created by any external force beyond the reality of people's own experience; even if this force is the sensationalist journalism of the Murdoch empire or the absurd propaganda of political tyrants. Media do indeed have an important influence on peoples' lives, but it is a limited one and none of us, least of all journalists themselves should forget it.

But do not misunderstand me, I am not arguing that media and the work of journalists are not of vital importance to the social, cultural and democratic life of society. Far from it. Today people need professional journalism more than ever, particularly to help them make sense of the barrage of information which comes from all sides. But we must acknowledge that journalism only has real influence when it is touching the social realities of people's lives and when it is in the service of society.

Today society is faced with many challenges and media can help form debate in a positive and constructive manner. Journalists have an important role to play in promoting human rights - including the rights of the child - as well as aiming for an fair and accurate portrayal of children in the media and their role in society.

2. Raising Awareness

Raising awareness about the rights of children and the promotion of children's rights is a challenge to media. Media must not just report fairly, honestly and accurately on the experience of childhood, but they must also provide space for the diverse, colourful and creative opinions of children themselves.

Whether it is news and current affairs, or the more complex world of the creative and performing arts, all media professionals and the organisations for which they work have a responsibility to recognise that children's rights concern them.

But how do we raise awareness? To answer this question requires serious examination of the way media work, of how existing principles of accountability apply, and how media must be freed from reins of political and economic control which limit professionalism and undermine ethical standards.

The important role that media play in raising public awareness of children's rights is well understood, but journalism can be an ambiguous partner. While media help to uncover cases of abuse of children and their rights and to raise awareness of the problem they also infiltrate the public with tolerant attitudes towards child pornography and prostitution or provide the means (for example advertisements) by which gratification may be achieved.

Therefore, the co-operation of media organisations and journalists and their orientation towards safeguarding the rights and the dignity of children and young adults is extremely important for all who strive for wider recognition of children's rights.

Journalists need to be aware of the consequences of their reporting. Sensational coverage often distorts and exploits a serious problem, perhaps doing more harm than good, but often the response of editors will be that they are trying to fulfil the responsibility to cover serious social issues, while continuing to turn a profit. Sensationalism, they argue, permits an important but unpleasant topic to be covered in such a way that it still captures the readers' and viewers' attention.

However, this does not answer the need for more analysis of the social and economic causes of abuse of children: the corrupt employers, the pimps, the drug culture, the parents in poverty who are proud to have sold their children for a sum which will enable them to support the rest of the family.

Nevertheless, media can broaden the scope of reporting. The positive story of children, their lives and their rights is not being told in full. To examine how this can be changed requires examination of the professional conditions in which media work, a review of the principles or guidelines journalists and programme-makers should follow, and the obstacles - legal, financial, or cultural - that stand in the way of good journalism.

3. The Conditions in Which Media Work

The work of journalists, programme makers, and media organisations is subject to different forms of regulation around the world. In almost all countries, the rights of children are protected in the general law or in regulations specifically addressed at media:

Legal Control and Censorship

Most countries have laws covering arts, media and entertainment that define limits of explicit language, images and content. The law may also support structures for licensing journalists with additional rules providing penalties for breach of ethical conduct;

Codes of Conduct and Guidelines

Almost all journalists and broadcasters work to professional codes of ethics, formulated by trade unions or professional associations. Many media organisations themselves adopt voluntary guidelines for broadcasting or publishing. Although they may refer to the rights of children, they usually do so in very general terms;

Structures for Media Regulation

In many countries voluntary press councils supported by owners and journalists, or broadcasting authorities, may be established to oversee media activity. In audiovisual media they are usually underpinned by statute. They usually deal with complaints against journalists and media. Legislation circumscribing the media and children's rights includes laws for the protection of children, such as the withholding of information identifying children in court cases, in care, or as victims; laws to protect children from moral corruption; laws restricting pornography; and general laws on freedom of expression.

Attitudes to censorship and freedom of expression vary widely from country to country and culture to culture. In all countries, broadcasting tends to be more highly regulated than newspapers and magazines. The importance of the right to freedom of expression cannot be under-estimated, yet it is not without boundaries. Both the UN Universal Declaration of Human Rights and the European Convention for the Protection of Human Rights and Fundamental Freedoms draw attention to the responsibilities accompanying this right, including 'respect for the rights or reputations of others'.

The question of freedom of expression is relevant in particular to children. What is the distinction, for instance, between pornography, and the justifiable portrayal of 'childhood sexuality' in the arts and cinema, for instance? It has been argued that the US Supreme Court, in its anxiety to protect children, has thrown out 'important speech-protective features of the law', including 'the traditional protection afforded to artistic expression'.

But American lawyer Andrew Vachss, a specialist in child abuse cases, believes that the controversy over art is a red herring thrown up by the pedophile community: The issue is not "what is art?" but "what is victimisation?" I can no more accept a child pornographer saying he is a victim of censorship than I could a mugger claiming his field of activity was performance art.

The issue of rights to freedom of expression cannot be ignored by media professionals, but should be turned around to focus first on the rights of the child to freedom from fear and exploitation.

Nevertheless, journalists tend to be wary of regulators. They have much evidence to support the view that outside intervention in journalism inevitably leads to forms of censorship. However, it is a legitimate question whether media self-regulation is a sufficient answer to public concern over standards of journalism, particularly in an age when the growth of global media enterprises appears, in theory at least, to put media beyond the range of national public accountability.

Self-regulation, by which the errors of media professionals are dealt with by their peers, may not be convincing when media organisations appear to ignore the process or use professional codes to support their narrow interests, which in a commercial system of mass communication do not necessarily coincide with those of journalism or the public interest. An uncomfortable balance of interests prevails in today's media - in which many fear that ethical standards are being sacrificed in defence of commercial imperatives. One of the principle problems lies in the implementation and enforcement of rules. Very often even regulatory bodies lack the power to enforce sanctions that bite.

But the regulatory framework is only part of the media picture. Journalists and others argue strongly that to report effectively journalists and media need access to reliable information. They also need general respect for freedom of expression and journalistic independence. Too often, though, these basic conditions do not apply.

A starting point for good reporting is freedom of information. Journalists are only ever as good as their sources of information. Reporting on child rights requires access to a great deal of information about children, much of it held by the state authorities. Media cannot report effectively if information about education, health, employment, development and social conditions is not made generally available. In too many countries, governments and state institutions are secretive and hoard information. Citizens have a right to freedom of information. Without it, media cannot report accurately on the reality of children's lives.

Respect, too, for independent journalism is an essential condition for a media culture of openness about children and their rights. For example, journalists recognise that betraying sources not only inhibits their own ability to investigate; it also makes it more difficult for every journalist to work, and may even put their lives at risk, as well as the safety of the informants. The exploitation of children is such a sensitive issue that many abuses would never be revealed unless the people who provide the media with information: children, carers, educators and many others could be confident that their anonymity would be preserved. Promotion and respect for journalist's ethical

rights should be an element in any strategy aimed at creating the best professional conditions in which to promote the rights of children.

4. Children, Media and Codes of Conduct

Many of the professional obligations of journalists are set out in codes of professional conduct. But how effective are voluntary codes and guidelines? The simple answer is the same as that for all forms of self-regulation - it depends upon the professional confidence of journalists, their knowledge of the issues they are dealing with, and the conditions in which they work.

A world-wide study of codes carried out by the UK pressure group Presswise for the IFJ reveals that journalists' organisations until recently had few specific codes of good practice for covering the rights of children. To remedy this in May 1998 the International Federation of Journalists launched the first international guidelines for journalists covering children's rights at a conference attended by journalists from 70 countries. Regional discussion on these guidelines have already taken place in Latin America and Africa and further consultation is planned in Asia with a second world conference to take place in 2001.

The aim of this code - which is attached to this section - is to ensure accuracy and sensitivity among journalists when reporting on issues involving children. The code get to the core of people's concerns when it comes to how media deal with the children, including:

- a. sexual, violent or victim-focused programming and images that are potentially damaging to children;
- b. stereotypes and sensational presentation of journalistic material;
- c. media failure to consider the consequences of publication and to minimise harm to children;
- d. respect for the privacy of children and protection of their identity unless it is demonstrably in the public interest;
- e. the need to give children access to media to express their own opinions;
- f. the obligation to verify information before publication.

The challenge to journalists and media in addressing these problems is to be aware of their responsibilities and to promote improvements. While codes cannot guarantee ethical reporting, they do identify the professional dilemmas that journalists and media face when reporting on the rights of children.

The competitive nature of the media industry means that often media will cut corners to get information in order to beat a rival network or publication. Journalists must always be aware of the need for fair, open and straight forward methods in obtaining information. Above all, journalism should always be ethical. If this is true in the adult world it is doubly so when considering the needs of vulnerable children.

The need for journalistic training in reporting on the rights of children has never been greater, both at the entry point to journalism and in mid-career courses. Bad habits in the newsroom and the tyranny of deadlines will always be a handicap to good reporting, but they can be overcome if journalists and programme-makers at all levels are exposed to good practice and information about the importance of children's rights.

Ethical questions in journalists' training should focus on concrete examples of specific dilemmas, including the coverage of children's rights. It also requires a constructive and supportive debate within newsrooms about these issues.

In particular, journalists have to measure their independence and obligations to the truth against their responsibility to minimise harm, particularly to people who are vulnerable or are the victims of injustice. Journalists are wary of being recruited to advocacy of causes, no matter how

worthwhile, but they should have no objection to thinking through the consequences of what they publish or broadcast.

The issue of identity, for instance, is at the heart of journalistic endeavour. It is in the nature of journalism, from the first lesson in journalism school onwards, to provide facts, including personal details about whoever is involved in a story. The decision to suppress information has to be carefully considered, but the nature of children's rights should always encourage a journalist to respect, above all, the rights of the child.

5. Advertising and the Impact of New Technologies

Strongly commercial motives, primarily the need to win audiences and advertisers, influence the content of mass media communication. Advertising is also subject to a combination of legislation and self-regulation in the way it appeals to children. It is also one of the most controversial areas of media activity. Henry Danthan, Executive Manager of the World Federation of Advertisers, which represents national associations and multinational advertising companies, believes that an 'anti-advertising climate' is being fostered in some parts of Europe because of a misguided moral panic about its influence on children.

In other countries, says Danthan, children's role in society is so different that it is not perceived as a problem. "It's a question which is less at the forefront of regulators' concerns than, for instance, tobacco or alcohol". Nevertheless, these days the advertising industry is, without doubt, sensitive about allegations over its use of children.

In the end, there are two problems with the concept of self-regulation in advertising. The first is that mechanisms are only equipped to deal with grave breaches of regulations. But it is not the grave cases that are the main problem; it is the accumulative effect of banal stereotypes that are used everyday without sanction. Secondly, advertising codes, like those covering journalism, often rely on notions such as 'good taste', 'bad taste' and 'decency'. But how are these terms to be interpreted and implemented?

But while efforts continue to set standards in the existing world of media technology, the development of new forms of communication such as the Internet open up opportunities for paedophiles and pornographers that raise international concern. The major problem in controlling material on the Internet is that nobody controls it. Nevertheless, recent international strikes against pedophile networks by police have shown that online services are no safe haven for people who exploit children.

Free-speech campaigners both in the United States and Europe have won major victories against government attempts control content on the Internet, but the need for safeguards remains. Many of these can be found in the development of technical resources for parents and children to put up protective barriers to online exploitation.

The online world provides great opportunities for children, but many of them are excluded because of a poverty of technical and financial resources - the British Council reported recently, for instance, that only 0.1 per cent of Africans have access to the Internet. Access to the Internet balanced against protection from exploitation is a major challenge for all of those striving to give children a voice.

Whatever media strategies may emerge in the campaign for children's rights, they will have to be linked to this rapidly-changing media environment, and one that offers much less scope for centralised control and regulation than before. Solutions will have to be found in mechanisms that empower adults and young people themselves to exercise control over the on-line world.

IFJ Recommendations For Raising Awareness and Promotion of Child Rights

Media professionals need to develop strategies that strengthen the role of media in providing information on all aspects of the children's rights. The following recommendations are designed to raise awareness about the importance of the rights of children.

a. Training for journalists and Media Education

1. Ethical questions should have a higher profile in journalists' training, particularly with regard to standards of conduct in reporting issues affecting children.
2. Materials outlining the Convention on the Rights of the Child and its implications for media as well as examples of good practice within media can form the basis of training courses and manuals for journalists and other media professionals.

b. Creating the Conditions for Professional Journalism

1. Governments and authorities should work with media and other civil society groups to create the legal and cultural framework for professional journalism, including freedom of information legislation and respect for independent journalism.
2. Media professionals should recognise that freedom of expression must go hand in hand with other fundamental human rights, including freedom from exploitation and intimidation. They should give careful consideration to the facts when weighing up the relative merits of the different claims, and not allow themselves to be swayed by commercial or political considerations;
3. Dialogue between media organisations, journalists and programme makers and relevant groups within civil society should be supported to highlight problems and concerns and better understanding of the needs of journalists and media when reporting children's issues.
4. National NGOs should consider compiling a directory of reliable experts on the rights of children and related topics, to be distributed to media. Such information could also be accessible on computer data banks.

c. Codes of Conduct and Self Regulation

1. Codes of conduct and reporting guidelines can be useful in demonstrating that something needs to be done. Such codes are weapons in the hands of journalists and campaigners who can use them to take up issues with editors, publishers and broadcasters.
2. Specific guidelines on child rights reporting, such as those adopted by the IFJ, should be drawn up by professional associations to accompany their general ethical codes.
3. Journalists and programme-makers have a duty to increase public awareness of the violation of children's rights. However, reporting needs to be carried out with enormous care. In particular, media should adhere to the highest standards of professional conduct when reporting on the rights of children.
4. They should avoid, or challenge, the myths and stereotypes that surround children, particularly those from developing countries. For instance, the myth that parents in developing countries do not value their children; that girls are inferior to boys; that children are drawn into crime through their own fault; or that child labour and sex tourism alleviate poverty for the victim, or the host nation.
5. Journalists should never publish details that put vulnerable children at risk. Journalists should take particular care not to reveal information that damages the dignity of children, and avoid identifying them, while at the same time telling their stories in a compelling and newsworthy way.

d. The Need for Newsroom Debate

1. A constructive and supportive debate should be encouraged between media professionals, about reporting of children's rights and media images of children. Such dialogue should take place between media managements, editorial departments and marketing sections.
2. Media editors and managers should implement - from the top down - a policy which makes clear their opposition to biased and sensationalist coverage of children, and their

support for high ethical standards among journalists and programme-makers. This could be done through the elaboration, in consultation with media professionals, of guidelines, which should be seriously implemented and monitored.

3. Media organisations should consider appointing specialist 'children's correspondents', with responsibility for covering all aspects of children's lives. Specific training to help journalists to express children's points of view. This might include: child growth and development, child abuse, risk factors, children's sexual terminology, the law, interviewing techniques, communication with children, etc.

4. New means of giving children access to the media, as 'sources' or commentators, should be investigated. Children should know that information or opinions offered in confidence would be protected as such.

e. Children, Media and the Community

1. Children, from primary school upwards, should undergo media literacy training, to help them understand and decode the messages they receive from both programmes and advertising, so as to become critical and well-informed media consumers.

C. Children and Publicity

By Mike Jempson (Director, The PressWise Trust) & David Niven (Director, Action against Child Exploitation)

This commentary considers the positive and negative impact of children appearing in documentary-style TV programmes about young people under the age of 16 considered in some sense to be 'at risk'. We have attempted to find common ground between two perspectives that are often felt to be in conflict – that of the journalist and the social worker responsible for child protection.

While TV as a mass medium brings with it special consequences - more people may see a regional programme than might read a local paper, or see a networked programme than might read a national paper. However, to some extent the same problems might arise from newspaper/magazine coverage as from TV coverage: a child's identity, relatives, location, behaviour pattern etc. might become widely known, bringing with it a certain notoriety; opinions will form in the eyes of the observer whatever the context in which the 'story' is told; and controversy may develop about courses of action/treatment in which the child becomes 'iconic'.

In themselves stories or documentaries headlined 'The most difficult child in Britain'; '100 convictions and he's only 14!'; 'Brave girl faces death with a smile', 'At risk - child in care face hidden abuse' etc. do little to assist in resolving an individual's behaviour patterns and may do little more than alert the public to social, psychological or medical conditions for which treatment is likely to be complex and/or the subject of debate among professionals.

Of course there are occasions when such films have a profound effect upon public consciousness and can be a tremendous force for good. But there is an increasing risk that the 'tabloid' nature of such stories/programmes - where issues are simplified or sensationalised to focus attention and highlight extremes rather than exploring more problematic areas of 'greyness' - can leave false impressions, through faulty or foreshortened analysis.

Increased competition for ratings means that documentaries have to fight for an accessible slot in the schedules; as a result there has been a growing tendency to generate controversy by promoting the stories they have to tell through sensationalism. In other words the marketing of the programmes as well as the construction of the programmes themselves may distort rather than distil the information which is being presented.

In the UK, most documentary strands are now made by independent production companies, who have to 'pitch' for their commission. They come up with an idea/issue assemble the likely

evidence they will use, and seek development funds from a broadcasting company with which to complete their project. This is an aspect of marketing that the public never sees.

At this stage there is still no guarantee that the finished film will be purchased or broadcast. Transmission is not just dependent upon the quality of the final product. Another consideration is the extent to which it lives up to/demonstrates the validity of the original 'pitch'. And of course it has to be watched, which means it has to be watchable.

During development researchers will make contact with potential contributors, and collect a great deal of information; while they will listen to the stories they are told, their questions will be geared to the intentions of the programme-maker (rather than the protagonists).

It is during this phase that the protagonists begin to develop their own idea about what the programme is seeking to achieve, and frequently arrive at a rather different interpretation of events than the producer has in mind. Those taking part may never meet or talk to the producer/director until filming starts, and they will rarely know or see what other contributions are being made.

The structure and message of the final product comes in the selection and editing from a mass of material/images and the dubbing in of a commentary; over this process none of the participants has any control. What they see on the screen, often for the first time, will rarely match the idea they have formed of what film is being made. It comes as a real shock to some, by which time such 'damage' as the film causes will already have been done.

Producers' guidelines drawn up media regulators and broadcasting companies may specify that participants should be made aware of the nature of the product to which they are contributing, and the extent to which they may have (usually very limited) power of veto. It would be inappropriate to allow any one participant to have total editorial control, but even the concerns of acknowledged experts who might be acting as consultants cannot over-ride the editorial decisions of the programme-maker and the commissioning editor.

It is worth rehearsing the conditions under which a film reaches the public (a similar if more intimate system of selection and editing takes place in a newspaper/magazine office) when considering the likely impact upon children who feature in it.

The documentary film is a construct which represents their world more or (most often) less accurately than they perceive it themselves. But to the outside observer (who may or may not know the child) it is their life. And so it can easily become their life - because we know the camera never lies (does it?), and newspapers wouldn't publish outright lies (would they?).

We are not aware of much follow-up research on the medium to long term impact of child appearances, although there is always the danger that once a newspaper has sought (quite reasonably in 'the public interest' in its view) to identify a persistent juvenile offender, the notoriety has the effect of lending a perverse status to the offence and the offender. Teenagers rely heavily upon peer groups for validation, and publicity lends 'authority' to an offender either by engendering fear or stimulating public abhorrence, which can in itself make an offender a 'hero' to his or her peers.

Just as those responsible for the care of young people are jealous of their responsibility, so those who edit newspapers or TV programmes are jealous of theirs. Seeking to negotiate changes/improvements in the way children are represented in/by the media requires care since journalists and film-makers are already constrained not only by industry guidelines but also by numerous legal restrictions. Journalists are likely to resent interference from those who can already call upon professional confidentiality and the courts to limit what is known about young people caught up in crime, abuse or familial conflict.

The difficulty is that neither side fully appreciates the constraints, or sometimes the motives of the other. And journalists in all media stand accused of being untrustworthy because of the past actions of colleagues who have abused confidences or acted otherwise unethically. A *rapprochement* is vital, yet the media industries are disparate and there are divisions of opinion among social workers, paediatricians, lawyers and the police.

There would seem to be two ways forward: developing greater understanding 'at the top' and especially among those responsible for training in each of the disciplines; and discussions at a local level to develop trust among those concerned with protecting children (which does include journalists). Out of such dialogue could come clearer guidance (along the lines of those proposed by the UK Association of Photographers, *see below*) governing the conditions under which children are filmed (and including specific regulations about chaperones), as well as best practice arrangements covering research and presentation of sensitive subject matter.

When a system of management is shrouded in 'secrecy', it is natural that those whose task is to reveal information to the public will want to investigate the way it functions and any allegations they receive of 'abuse of power'. That is part of the system of accountability we all expect in a democracy. Where 'freedom of information' is not guaranteed by statute, a vacuum exists which is the investigative reporter quite properly seeks to fill, even at the risk of appearing intrusive. Greater mutual trust, and recognition of the validity of motives which find different forms of expression (the paediatrician or police officer who prefers secrecy, the journalist who prefers publication), could give rise to more thoughtful use of children's experiences in TV and the print media. It might also make it easier for everyone to admit mistakes - and mistakes are bound to be made. But greater openness also means a willingness to take responsibility for mistakes, and their consequences. It is as justified for the media to highlight the shortcomings of the authorities as it is for the public to challenge the shortcomings of the media.

The only other alternative is to introduce stricter legal restrictions on the use or representation of children. Journalists are not the only people who believe that any restriction is too much in an open society, and that a more liberal interpretation of the law might help to improve public understanding of the issues at stake. If journalists were able to attend family court hearings under conditions which protect the identity of the children (and the families) involved, for instance, some myths and misleading information about abuse and childcare practices might be corrected. Recourse to law is not the most sensible approach when it is the opacity of legal process is one of the concerns of journalists keen to protect the interests of children.

D. UK Association of Photographers draft guidelines.

1. Photographers should try to stop taking pictures of children in underwear, especially for mail order catalogues (a known and easily accessible source of paedophile material). Assistance from large mail order firms and large groups of department stores who produce smaller catalogues and PR pictures needs to be sought.
2. Photographic collections of children held with stock libraries need to be monitored carefully, to be doubly sure who they are selling to and what they will be used for.
3. Manipulation of stills and films, and especially pop videos where children are being used a lot, need to be looked into. (One parent was asked if her son could be filmed dancing and pulling off his shirt — the plan was to then manipulate his sister's head onto his body. The mother refused and it didn't happen.)
4. No child should ever go on any shoot without a chaperon.
5. The chaperon should have the right to be in the same room where the child is working, at all times. If at any time the chaperon feels the child is being misused, over-worked or bullied, s/he should be able to withdraw the child from the session without forfeiting the fee — especially in such cases where the child is asked to do something utterly different to that for which they were hired.
6. A chaperon must never leave a child in a session on her or his own, however boring it may be to sit and wait for the session to finish.
7. If a parent cannot take a child to the shoot, s/he should notify the photographer with the name of the chaperon and make sure the photographer has a 'phone number to contact the parent/s in an emergency.
8. Children must not be allowed to travel unaccompanied in mini-cabs or taxis. If this is really necessary a radio-controlled black cab should be used in order to keep the child in contact with an adult known to them.
9. If a child (usually a young teenager) is sent on a shoot without a chaperon, the agency and photographer/client must be notified before the shoot and given the right to cancel if they are not

willing to accept responsibility for the child. At all times, the parents' contact number must be supplied in advance in case of emergencies.

10. If the model agency has a call from a photographer/client for one of their children's books, and the photographer or client is new to them, references need to be sought before the book is sent.

11. Children are often worked far too long, or kept hanging about on shoots. Strict guidelines are needed as to how long each age group may work.

12. Parents must be educated, possibly through women's magazines, in what are normal modelling activities and what are not. Too many parents are keen to get their children photographed and consequently can put them in potentially dangerous situations.

E. THE CONVENTION ON THE RIGHTS OF THE CHILD

(A Journalist's Summary)

1. All people under 18, unless by law majority is attained at an earlier age.

2. Non-discrimination

All rights apply to all children without exception, and the state is obliged to protect children from any form of discrimination. The state must not violate any right and must take positive action to promote them all.

3. Best interests of the child

All actions concerning the child should take full account of his or her best interests. The state is to provide adequate care when parents or others responsible fail to do so.

4. Implementation of rights

The state is obliged to translate the rights in the Convention into reality.

5. Parental guidance and the child's evolving capacities

The state has a duty to respect the rights and responsibilities of parents or the extended family to provide appropriate direction and guidance to children in the exercise of their rights.

6. Survival and development

The child has an inherent right to life, and the state must ensure the maximum survival and development of the child.

7. Name and nationality

Every child has the right to have a name from birth and to be granted a nationality.

8. Preservation of identity

The state is obliged to protect and, if necessary, re-establish the basics of a child's identity (name, nationality and family ties).

9. Separation from parents

Children have the right to live with their parents unless this is incompatible with their best interests; to maintain contact with both parents if separated from one or both; and the right to be informed by the state of the whereabouts of their parents if such separation is the result of action by the state.

10. Family re-unification

Children and their parents have the right to leave any country and to enter their own in order to be reunited or to maintain the child/parent relationship.

11. Illicit transfer and non-return

The state is obliged to try to prevent and remedy the kidnapping or retention of children in another country by a parent or third party.

12. The child's opinion

The child has the right to express an opinion and to have that opinion taken into account in any matter or procedure affecting the child.

13. Freedom of expression

Children have the right to obtain and make known information and to express their views, unless this would violate the rights of others.

14. Freedom of thought, conscience and religion

The child has the right to freedom of thought, conscience and religion, subject to appropriate parental guidance and national law.

15. Freedom of association

The child has the right to meet with others and to join or set up associations, unless doing so violates the rights of others.

16. Protection of privacy

Children have the right to protection from interference with their privacy, family, home and correspondence and from libel/slander.

17. Access to appropriate information

The media has a duty to disseminate information to children that is of social, moral, educational and cultural benefit to them, and which respects their cultural background. The state is to take measures to encourage the publication of material of value to children and to protect children from harmful materials.

18. Parental responsibilities

Both parents jointly have primary responsibility for bringing up their children and the state should support them in this task.

19. Protection from abuse and neglect

The state is obliged to protect children from all forms of physical or mental violence perpetrated by parents or others responsible for their care, and to undertake preventive and treatment programmes in this regard.

20. Protection of children without families

The state is obliged to provide special protection for children deprived of their family environment and to ensure that appropriate alternative family care or institutional placement is made available to them, taking into account the child's cultural background.

21. Adoption

In countries where adoption is recognised and/or allowed, it shall only be carried out in the best interests of the child, with all necessary safeguards for a given child and authorisation by the competent authorities.

22. Refugee children

Special protection is to be granted to children who are refugees or seeking refugee status, and the state is obliged to cooperate with competent organisations providing such protection and assistance.

23. Disabled children

Disabled children have the right to special care, education and training designed to help them to achieve greatest possible self-reliance and participation to lead a full and active life in society.

24. Health and health services

The child has the right to the highest level of health and access to health and medical services, with special emphasis on primary and preventive health care, public health education and the reduction of infant mortality. The state is obliged to work towards the abolition of harmful traditional practices. Emphasis is laid on the need for international cooperation to ensure this right.

25. Periodic review of placement

A child placed by the state for reasons of care, protection or treatment, has the right to have all aspects of that placement evaluated regularly.

26. Social security

Children have the right to benefit from social security.

27. Standard of living

Children have the right to benefit from an adequate standard of living. It is the primary responsibility of parents to provide this and the state's duty to ensure that parents are able to fulfill that responsibility. The state may provide material support in the case of need, and may seek to ensure recovery of child maintenance costs from absent parents or guardians.

28. Education

The child has the right to education and the state has a duty to ensure that primary education, at least, is made free and compulsory. Administration of school discipline is to reflect the child's human dignity. Emphasis is laid on the need for international cooperation to ensure this right.

29. Aims of education

The state must recognise that education should be directed at developing the child's personality and talents, preparing the child for active life as an adult, fostering respect for basic human rights and developing respect for the child's own cultural and national values and those of others.

30. Children of minorities or indigenous people

Children of minority communities and indigenous people have the right to enjoy their own culture and to practice their own religion and language.

31. Leisure, recreation and cultural activities

Children have the right to leisure, play and participation in cultural and artistic activities.

32. Child labour

The state is obliged to protect children from engaging in work that constitutes a threat to their health, education or development, to set minimum ages for employment, and to regulate conditions of employment.

33. Drug abuse

The child has the right to protection from the use of narcotic and psychotropic drugs and from being involved in their production or distribution.

34. Sexual exploitation

The child has the right to protection from sexual exploitation and abuse, including prostitution and involvement in pornography.

35. Sale, trafficking and abduction

The state is obliged to make every effort to prevent the sale, trafficking and abduction of children.

36. Other forms of exploitation

The child has the right to protection from all other forms of exploitation not covered in articles 32, 33, 34 and 35.

37. Torture and deprivation of liberty

The prohibition of torture, cruel treatment or punishment, capital punishment and life imprisonment. Arrest and any form of restriction of liberty must be used only as a last resort and for the shortest appropriate time. Children have the right to appropriate treatment, separation from detained adults, contact with their family and access to legal and other assistance.

38. Armed conflicts

States are obliged to respect and ensure respect for humanitarian law as it applies to children. No child under 15 years of age should take a direct part in hostilities or be recruited into the armed forces, and all children affected by armed conflict should benefit from protection and care.

39. Rehabilitative care

The state is obliged to ensure that children damaged by armed conflict, torture, neglect, maltreatment or exploitation receive appropriate treatment for their recovery and social reintegration.

40. Administration of juvenile justice

Children alleged or recognised as having committed an offence have the right to respect for their human rights and, in particular, to benefit from all aspects of the due process of law, including legal or other assistance in preparing and presenting their defence. Recourse to judicial proceedings and institutional placements should be avoided wherever possible and appropriate.

41. Respect for existing standards

If any standards set in national law or other applicable international instruments are higher than those of this Convention, it is the higher standard that applies.

42-54. Publicising and implementing the Convention

The state is obliged to make the rights contained in the Convention widely known to adults and children.

States elect a Committee on the Rights of the Child composed of 10 experts, which considers reports submitted by parties to the Convention two years after ratification and every five years thereafter.

These reports are to be made available to the general public.

The Committee may propose that special studies be undertaken on specific issues relating to the rights of the child, and makes its evaluations known to the State Party concerned as well as to the United Nations General Assembly.

To foster implementation of the Convention and encourage international cooperation, bodies such as the International Labour Organization (ILO), the World Health Organization (WHO), the United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization (UNESCO) and the United Nations Children's Fund (UNICEF) are encouraged to advise the Committee and permitted to attend its meetings.

They can submit pertinent information to the Committee and be asked to advise on the optimal implementation of the Convention, together with other bodies recognised as competent — including other United Nations bodies and NGOs which have consultative status with the United Nations.

F. A PACT FOR CHILDREN

Following the Brussels Seminar, held in the presence of delegates from the World Tourism Organisation, UNICEF, ECPAT, the Federation of Hotel and Restaurant Workers and the International Federation of Free Trades Unions, the International Federation of Journalists and The PressWise Trust issued the following statement:

Having considered the legal, practical and ethical issues raised by reporting about violence against children; being concerned by media representations of violence and especially the issues of trafficking, the sexual abuse of children by tourists and paedophiles; and noting the use of the Internet for illicit activities and child pornography; and further considering a range of training modules designed to improve media coverage of such sensitive issues; we strongly recommend the following actions to raise awareness of these issues and to improve media performance in reporting issues related to child sex tourism:

The International Federation of Journalists and The PressWise Trust should jointly seek endorsement by media organisations and journalists' groups of a Pact for Children that places the interests of children at the forefront of media concerns, without compromising the journalistic independence, by raising awareness within the media professions about the rights of children and how they can be protected, and, in particular, by:

- a. Developing ethical media policies and practices to avoid sensationalism, stereotyping and the undervaluing of children and their rights,*
- b. Protecting children from harmful content in the development of media products and technologies,*
- c. Taking special care about representations of violence*

- d. Seeking to expose of all forms of exploitation of children, especially commercial and sexual exploitation and other forms of physical and mental abuse;*
 - e. Encouraging fair and accurate coverage of children's role in society;*
 - f. Creating increased opportunities for children's access to and participation in the media.*
- The participants further agree that there is an urgent need to promote better contact and co-operation between all the players involved in work to combat child sex tourism - the governments, industry and the workforce, non-governmental organisations, media and journalists.*

In pursuit of these objectives, the meeting agrees that the following actions should be taken by the IFJ, in co-operation with The PressWise Trust:

- i. To circulate the results of the conference to all journalists' groups in Europe and to stimulate actions at a national level that bring together groups campaigning against child sex tourism, and representatives of the industry and workforce and journalists.*
 - ii. To contact the World Tourism Organisation and seek representation on the International Task Force dealing with child sex tourism;*
 - iii. To strengthen links with relevant NGOs and, in particular, ECPAT and to propose to ECPAT the joint preparation of a handbook for journalists and NGO campaigners on the role of media in combating child sex tourism;*
 - iv. To engage more effectively representatives of major publishing houses and broadcasting organisations in future actions and to make special efforts to involve travel guide publishers;*
 - v. To campaign within journalism for more awareness on this issue and to disseminate widely the IFJ International Code of Practice for Reporting of Child Rights and to involve other relevant writers' organisations, including the associations and guilds of travel writers at national and international level;*
 - vi. To establish a network between representatives of the workforce and journalists groups, building initially upon the existing links between the International Transport Federation, the International Union of Foodworkers, the Union Network International and the IFJ which cover all groups of workers in the travel, hotel, tourism, media and journalism sectors.*
 - vii. To prepare interventions and strategies on the need for effective information strategies to be presented to forthcoming meetings sponsored by United Nations agencies and the European Union and, in particular, to prepare an intervention for the Second World Conference on the Commercial Sexual Exploitation of Children planned for Japan in December 2001.*
- Brussels, October 2000*

APPENDIX 2

A. Selected reading list for trainers

Compiled by The Centre for Studies in Crime and Social Justice, The Child Psychotherapy Trust, and The PressWise Trust

THE MEDIA AND VIOLENCE

- *Reporting Tragedies: Hillsborough & Dunblane* by Ann Jemphrey & Eileen Berrington, *Free Press*, No 109. 1999
- *Draft Guidelines and principles for reporting on issues involving children*, IFJ, 1998
- *Guidelines on children and violence (extracts)* ITC, RA, BBC & ASA
- *Children and harmful influences from the media* by Thomas Hammarberg from *Children and media violence* Ulla Carlsson & Cecilia von Feilitzen, UNESCO/Nordicom Yearbook, 1998
- *Children and Publicity* by Mike Jempson & David Niven, discussion document for Royal College of Paediatrics Ethics Committee, 1997
- *The risks attached to investigating abuse* (Dean Nelson's experience), from *Child Exploitation & the Media: Forum Report & Recommendations*, ACHE/PressWise, 1997
- *Privacy, confidentiality and publicity in children's cases* by Jane Hoyal (Family Law Team), from *Child Exploitation & the Media: Forum Report & Recommendations*, ACHE/PressWise, 1997
- *Recommendations of the panel of inquiry* by Elizabeth Lawson QC, from *Child Exploitation & the Media: Forum Report & Recommendations*, ACHE/PressWise, 1997

- *Constant attention: supervising television broadcasts for & about children* by Andrea Millwood Hargrave, from *Child Exploitation & the Media: Forum Report & Recommendations*, ACHE/PressWise, 1997
- *No wimps in Wenatchee* by Brian Winston, *British Journalism Review*, Vol. 6, No.4 1995
- *Media* by D. Jackson, from *Destroying the baby in themselves: why did the two boys kill James Bulger?*, Mushroom 1995
- *The role & function of the media in the aftermath of disasters*, extract from *No Last Rights: The denial of justice and the promotion of myth in the aftermath of the Hillsborough disaster*, Scraton/Jemphrey/Coleman LCC/Alden Press 1995 ISBN 0 904517 30 6

CHILDREN AND DIRECT EXPOSURE TO VIOLENCE

- *The impact of civil disturbance on Children and families* by Patricia Donnelly, speakers notes from *The impact of violence on children*, Belfast 1997
- *The impact of trauma on families* by Arlene Healey, Family Trauma Centre, Belfast
- *Assessing the impact of war on children* by Mona Macksoud, J.Lawrence Aber & Ilene Chon, from *Mindfields in their hearts: the mental health of children in ware and communal Violence*, R.J. Apfel & B Simon, Yale University Press, 1996
- *Challenges we face in understanding children and war: a personal essay* by James Garbarino, from *Child Abuse & Neglect*, Vol 17 , 1993
- *Children living through a desert storm* by Alvin Rosenfeld, from *Child Abuse & Neglect*, Vol 17, 1993
- *War experiences and psychological impact on children* by M. Raundalen & A Dyregrov, from *Reaching children in war: Sudan, Uganda & Mozambique* by C.P. Dodge & M. Raundalen, 1991

REFUGEE CHILDREN

- *The emotional impact of violence on children* by Sheila Melzak, from *Violence in children and adolescents* Ed. V. Varma, 1997

THE VICTIM'S PERSPECTIVE

- *Post trauma stress* compiled by Gladeana McMahon, from *Understanding trauma* (Trainers' Resources) National Extension College
- *Managing grief in the media spotlight: a personal point of view* by Chris Hook, from *Child Exploitation & the Media: Forum Report & Recommendations*, ACHE/PressWise, 1997
- *Breaking the silence: recollections of abuse* by Marion Hitchings, from *Child Exploitation & the Media: Forum Report & Recommendations*, ACHE/PressWise, 1997
- *Sometimes I feeling cannot go on anymore: attempted suicide, young people and the media* by Di Stubbs (Samaritans), from *Child Exploitation & the Media: Forum Report & Recommendations*, ACHE/PressWise, 1997

A extremely useful education pack and video on the topic was published during the contract period *PANIC ATTACKS: debates about violence and the media* by Jenny Grahame with Kate Domaille, English & Media Centre, 2000

ADDENDUM, compiled by Val Goulden

- *Children, the UN Convention and the Media* by Thomas Hammarberg, from *Children and Media: Image Education Participation*, UNESCO/Nordicom Yearbook 1999
- *Children and Harmful Influences from the Media* by Thomas Hammarberg From *Children and media violence*, UNESCO/Nordicom Yearbook 1998
- *UNESCO Global Study on Media Violence* by Joe Groebel, report presented to the Director General of UNESCO 1998
- *Violence and the Viewer*, Report of the Joint Working party on Violence in Television 1998, British Broadcasting Corporation, Broadcasting Standards Commission, Independent Television Commission

- *Violence in factual television*, Broadcasting Standards Council Annual Research Review 1993
- *Creating a Space for Children*, Children's Film and Television in EU Countries, Volume 1 1996. International Centre of Films for Children and Young People (CIFEJ)
- *Creating a Space for Children*, Children's Film and Television in Central and Eastern European Countries, Volume 2 1997. International Centre of Films for Children and Young People (CIFEJ)
- *The effective media* by David Miller and Greg Philo, from *Message Received*, Ed. Greg Philo, 1999, Addison Wesley Longman
- *Facing Facts, The Emotional Politics of News* by David Buckingham, from *Moving Images: Understanding Children's Emotional Response to Television*, 1996 Manchester University Press
- *Children's Fright Reactions to Television News* by Joanne Cantor and Amy I Nathanson, University of Wisconsin-Madison, from *Journal of Communication* 46(4) 1996
- *Impact of Television News Exposure on Children's Perceptions of Violence in Northern Ireland* by Ed Cairns, *Journal of Social Psychology* 130(1990)
- *Juvenation: News, Girls and Power* by John Hartley, from *Gender, News and Power* Eds. Cynthia Carter, Gill Branston and Stuart Allan 1998 Routledge
- *When the 'Extraordinary' becomes 'Ordinary': Everyday News of Sexual Violence* by Cynthia Carter, from *Gender, News and Power*, Eds. Cynthia Carter, Gill Branston and Stuart Allan 1998 Routledge
- *The Media and Public Awareness of Child Abuse and Neglect: It's Time for a Change* by Richard D. Krugman, *Child Abuse and Neglect*, Volume 20 No. 4 (1996)
- *The Impact of News Media on Child Abuse Reporting* by Suzanne McDevitt, *Child Abuse and Neglect*, Volume 20 No. 4 (1996)

B. BIBLIOGRAPHY

As part of the Project PressWise commissioned the production of bibliographies and selected texts as reference material for those wishing to delve further into the issues raised by the project and the training modules.

Researcher Valerie Goulden has produced an exhaustive bibliography of media coverage of violence - both in real-life and fiction, comprising some 600 titles which have been categorised into the following sections: -

- Children and direct exposure to violence;
- refugee children; the victim's perspective
- Children, violence and the media (real-life)
- Children, violence and the media (fiction)
- Children, violence and the media (general)

The full bibliography, including references, can be obtained from PressWise and will be incorporated into the website section dealing with this Project.

C. Useful websites

During the Project lists of over 100 useful web-sites were assembled. This process continues, and many of them can be accessed directly via links on this web-site or the International Federation of Journalists website - www.ifj.org

D. Regulations and codes of practice

The Project team drew upon media regulations and professional codes of practice in each of the four participating countries. These exist to set standards for editorial content, but over time they are reviewed and modified in the light of changing circumstances. The team also looked at laws affecting coverage of children.

Many of these codes can be accessed directly on this website which also identifies the basic principles of regulation, self-regulation and advice that bear directly on media portrayal of violence affecting children. Updating and expanding this information remains a continuing function of the PressWise Trust.

APPENDIX 3

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a. Project team

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