



MEDIA DIVERSITY INSTITUTE

Reporting Diversity Manual



David Tuller

Reporting Diversity Manual

Foreword by John Owen

London, October 2002
A Media Diversity Institute publication
with the support of the European Union

Media Diversity Institute & Samizdat B92, 2002

Commissioned by the Media Diversity Institute

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This document has been produced with the financial assistance of the European Community. The views expressed herein are those of the Media Diversity Institute and can therefore in no way be taken to reflect the official opinion of the European Community.

Acknowledgements

We would like to thank our Reporting Diversity Network Partners from South East Europe for their contributions to this manual and their constant and kind cooperation throughout.

Remzi Lani, Ilda Londo, Albanian Media Institute; Veran Matić, Association of Independent Electronic Media (ANEM); Dragan Janjić, Igor Jovanović, Beta News Agency; Ioana Avedani, Center for Independent Journalism—Bucharest; Sandor Orban, Center for Independent Journalism—Budapest; Angela Siribu, Center for Independent Journalism—Chisinau; Kim Mehmeti, Centre for Multicultural Understanding and Cooperation; Milica Lučić-Čavić, Independent Journalist Association of Serbia; Stjepan Malović, International Center for Education of Journalists; Žaneta Trajkoska, Antoaneta Ivanova, Macedonian Institute for Media; Boro Kontić, Media Centar; Ognian Zlatev, Media Development Center; Zoran Udovičić, Radenko Udovičić, Media Plan Institute; Gabor Bernath, Roma Press Center; Stojan Obradović, STINA News Agency; Željko Ivanović, Vijesti; Feodor Ninčić and Stelian Dorobantu

We would especially like to thank Mirjana Milošević and Gabor Stojanovits.

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Reporting Diversity Manual

JOHN OWEN **Foreword**

Foreword

Will any amount of fair and accurate reporting about "the other" ever persuade my London mini-cab driver that all Chechens aren't "bandits and scum?" This recent immigrant from Bulgaria was railing about an extremist Chechen group that had held hundreds hostage in a Moscow theatre.

Or will better reporting in Slovakia help end the racial intolerance that was on display when football fans taunted black English footballers when they played in Bratislava?

The Media Diversity Institute believes that in struggling democracies journalism has too often been a negative force, publishing stories filled with half-truths, misinformation, and racial slurs.

Its founding Director, Milica Pesic, argues passionately that with proper training and re-training, a new breed of enlightened and responsible journalists can turn hateful communities into productive and tolerant democracies.

It's not as though Pesic and the Media Diversity Institute are trying to turn journalists into social workers bent on reforming their societies. They are challenging them to practice good fact-based, fair and impartial journalism that informs rather than misinforms.

To help journalists better understand where they have gone terribly wrong, the MDI has produced this Reporting Diversity Manual. It's a disturbing collection of bad, often vicious stories that can be used as case studies of how newspapers have served so badly their readers and communities. If the editors of these papers were doctors, they would have their licenses revoked for medical malpractice.

But this manual also gives journalists (and anyone interested in how to improve journalism) constructive advice about how to correct these mistakes and avoid making others. Every editor and reporter should keep this manual on their desk and ask themselves whether the story they have just written or edited could meet the editorial standards held up by the manual.

And it's not just post-conflict, transitional democracies that need to re-examine their reporting of "the other." Some British tabloid newspapers have tried to increase their circulation by rubbishing asylum seekers, "Gypsy" beggars, and gay politicians. They've traded short-term gains for long-term credibility. And in the United States, producers of prime-time television magazine programs have acknowledged that they often reject minority interviewees for fears that they will cause too many viewers to switch channels.

Where I wholeheartedly agree with Milica Pesic is that the journalism of diversity is not a problem, a millstone hanging around the neck of beleaguered editors and reporters. Smart, savvy editors will recognise that a poorly served or neglected part of the population can be added to the ranks of new readers. "Diversity Sells" is a sign that ought to be plastered all over editorial offices.

John Owen is former chief news editor of CBC television news, founding director of the European Centre of the Freedom Forum, and visiting professor of journalism at City University, London.

MILICA PEŠIĆ **Introduction**

Introduction

Many of us who experienced life under Communism believed, perhaps naively, that the fall of the Berlin Wall would ensure respect for individuals—and for their right to be different. We believed that fear and prejudice based on ethnic, political, religious and other differences would somehow give way to a new and welcome era of tolerance and compassion.

If nothing else, the long and bloody wars in the Balkans revealed just how wrong we were. What happened there not only destroyed human lives and long-established societies but provided a deadly lesson—if any was needed—in how effectively the media can help tear communities apart by inciting and encouraging inter-ethnic conflict. The propaganda broadcast on Serbian television—the hateful language it used to name those perceived as enemies, the lies and omissions in its coverage—is the best-known example, but not the only one. At times it seemed as if newspapers and broadcast outlets throughout the region were virtually competing with each other to disseminate the most vicious stereotypes and images of those perceived as ‘other.’

While the situation—and the media coverage of issues across the Balkans and more generally across South East Europe—has improved in the past couple of years, many problems remain. Severe human rights violations and ethnic rivalries still plague the region. Political opponents routinely express their disagreements in the most derogatory manner possible. Discrimination and intolerance based on religion, gender, social status, age, physical and emotional disability, sexual orientation, and other characteristics threaten the stability of the entire region and provide fertile ground to those who seek to promote extremism.

Regional media outlets frequently include almost no information to help their audience understand the rights, traditions, and needs of the different minority groups living among them. Instead, journalists all too often offer negative or at best superficial coverage which contributes greatly to suspicion and fear. With few exceptions, the media still advance the notion that difference signifies inferiority, that minority groups pose a threat to the nation and do not deserve equal rights or treatment.

This problem is obviously not limited to South East Europe and other regions in transition. In recent years, journalists and media decision-makers in Great Britain, the United States and other countries in the West have grappled with the issue of how to improve their coverage of all sorts of minority groups. While much progress has been made, examples of ethnic stereotypes, insulting language, and one-sided reporting can still be found without looking too hard.

Yet the stakes are higher for countries still pursuing the difficult path to democracy. For the essence of the democratic project itself assumes the full inclusion and integration of all peoples into the life of the nation. And the media represent a powerful social resource that can—and must—be mobilised to assist in this process of reconciliation. When journalists pursue their mission with goodwill and an open mind,

they can play a major role in transforming relations between various ethnic, religious and other community groups in emerging democratic societies.

Recognising this potential, the Media Diversity Institute has developed and implemented a regional Reporting Diversity (RD) training programme, thanks to the support of the European Commission. The core of the programme is the Reporting Diversity Network (RDN), launched in November 1998, which connects journalists, news organisations, journalism schools and other media organisations and assistance centres across Central and Eastern Europe. The network seeks to promote and institutionalise the highest standards of professional journalism through training strategies and practical reporting initiatives, as well as to mobilize the power of the media in support of deeper public understanding of diversity, minority communities, and human rights.

We believe that fair, accurate, sympathetic and in-depth reporting is vital in promoting this understanding, confronting prejudice and challenging radical political agendas. In fact, there is an essential link between developing democratic institutions and respecting diversity. No society is truly homogeneous, and the transition to democracy cannot be accomplished without recognition of that fact. If a key function of journalism is to reflect the needs and aspirations of all members of society, then journalists must find ways and techniques to do just that—not simply as a matter of fairness but as a step in offering everyone the opportunity to share in the responsibilities and rewards of citizenship.

This emphasis on reporting diversity is not just a question of excellent journalism. It is also prudent business practice. By increasing the inclusiveness of coverage, media organisations will be able to break out of the narrow confines of the segmented markets in which most currently find themselves. They will discover they can greatly strengthen their connections with an untapped potential audience, especially among those who have not generally felt their lives and perspectives to be respected or well represented by newspapers and broadcast outlets.

Despite our differences, we are all members of the communities in which we live and work. We all want to live in peace and contribute to our societies. We all want to be able to feed our families and educate our children. And we must learn to treat our astonishing diversity as a source of strength and hope, of enrichment and curiosity—not as an excuse for violence and a cause for despair.

As journalists, we have a unique opportunity to facilitate the process of reconciliation. We possess the ability to help all members of our communities express their needs and desires. We have the power to help eliminate stereotypes and misrepresentations of ethnic, racial and religious minorities within our societies. And we have the authority to shape the discussion and define the areas of common ground through accurate, unbiased reporting.

This manual is just part of our comprehensive programme to help emerging societies better deal with questions of diversity and 'otherness.' Its prime goal is to enable journalists to improve their reporting on minority groups, inter-ethnic relations and basic human rights. The manual can also be used by editors and owners of media organisations, who bear ultimate responsibility for how such issues are covered.

Since the creation of the Reporting Diversity Programme, we have produced eight national versions of the RD Resource Manual for the various countries of South East

Europe as well as two English-language international editions in cooperation with our RD partner organisations. The current manual builds on our experience thus far by establishing a systematic methodology for all RD training activities, for both reporters and media decision-makers. We hope you will find it useful and user-friendly. Please feel free to copy and share any of MDI's material in this manual – the more use that is made of it the better. We ask that when using our material, please mention that it came from us. Thanks!

Milica Pešić,
Director
Media Diversity Institute

2. General tips on reporting diversity

General tips on reporting diversity

One of the most important tasks that journalists face is to write about people who are unlike themselves in fundamental ways. Whether a source is of another ethnicity, religious faith, sexual orientation, social class, or economic status, the role of the journalist is often to convey accurately that person's perspective, ideas or worldview—even when the differences are profound.

In areas like South East Europe, where social and ethnic divisions have ripped apart the fabric of numerous communities, achieving that goal can be particularly elusive. It is not, however, impossible. And if journalists wish to facilitate healing and reconciliation within their societies, it is essential that they do their utmost to promote understanding and tolerance—rather than fear and distrust—of difference.

Tips for finding sources

Some strategies relate mainly to specific groups or types of difference. But the following suggestions apply across the board:

★ When you write a story about an ethnic, social, religious or other minority, it is extremely important to interview representatives of that group and include their perspectives in the piece. Otherwise, they are the 'objects' of the article rather than the 'subjects'. No article should criticise an entire group of people without offering members of that group an opportunity to present its own point of view and respond to accusations.

★ Be careful in your use of words and expressions. Words have a great power to hurt as well as to heal. Careless use of language can increase ethnic and social tensions, even if that is not what you mean to do. Be aware of how members of a minority prefer to be called in the language in which you are writing. Albanians refer to themselves as "Shiptars", for example, but when used in Slavic languages this is considered a derogatory word.

★ As you gather material, try to recognise any biases or prejudices you may have. Of course you will have your own opinions, but part of the role of journalism is to question your own and society's preconceived ideas. Many of the beliefs held by one group about another are based not on facts but on stereotypes, although often the stereotypes include an element of truth. For example, some gay men are effeminate (as are some straight men) but most are not.

★ Be careful when you use phrases like “as everyone knows” or “it is evident that.” This sort of expression is usually the way journalists introduce their own biases or those of their own social group, and whatever it is that “everyone knows” is as likely to be false or based on prejudice as it is to reflect a real understanding of the facts of a particular situation.

★ Most situations involving conflicts between social groups are complicated. Both sides generally have legitimate complaints and perspectives, and presenting those perspectives fairly and accurately is an important part of the journalist’s role. Try not to present difficult social questions in black-and-white terms.

★ Including people of different backgrounds is not just a question of fairness and balance it is important for the media from a business perspective as well. Many media outlets limit their potential audience by presenting only the perspective of a single group. If they make an effort to expand coverage to highlight other communities, they can also expand their audience at the same time.

★ Take care to provide some context for the events you are covering. Ethic, religious and other social struggles do not arise out of nothing. Usually there is a long history of conflict, with each side differing widely in its interpretations of the past. Before you can fairly present the material, you must understand what has come before and then you must decide how much of the past you need to include for readers to grasp the essential points.

★ Find unusual ways to write about the issues. Spend a whole day with a homeless person, a lesbian or a refugee to understand what their lives are really like. What are their hopes and fears? Do they conform to your stereotypes or not? If a social group objects to the use of a particular word to describe its members, explore the history of that word. What associations and ideas does it communicate when it is used? Why do people object to it? Why do members of another social group continue to use it?

★ Cultivate sources in other communities. Find people who are willing to keep you informed about what members of their social groups are thinking about, talking about, worrying about. Make contact with non-governmental organisations that represent these communities and ask them what aspects of their lives have not yet been covered. Ask them to keep in touch with you about political, social, economic and other developments that you might not otherwise hear about.

★ Be sceptical. Check facts. You should not accept at face value everything that you hear, whether it comes from a member of your own or another community. Remember that everybody you talk to or interview has a point of view and a particular interest. You need to take their perspective into consideration, but you need to balance it with what you hear from others and what you can observe on your own.

★ Do not treat ethnic and other minorities as monolithic. Even though it may look from the outside as if all members of a community have a single perspective, life is never so

simple. When one group views another as acting as a solid entity, it can greatly exacerbate tensions by feeding the perception that others are to be feared. Talk to as many people as possible within other social groups and present a range of views in as nuanced and clear a manner as possible.

★ Many people have strong negative feelings about different social groups. Just because some authorities, politicians, clerics, and others may use offensive terms and expressions when discussing minorities, this does not mean you are required, as a journalist, to include this sort of insulting language in your material. If necessary, paraphrase their words. If you decide to quote them directly, you should mention that members of the minority being discussed consider such language to be insulting and inflammatory.

Tips on interviewing people from other groups

★ Be sensitive and thoughtful. Understand that people who are different from you may be scared about talking to a journalist, even if it is not the first time they have done so. To put them at ease, you might start off the conversation with “small talk”—about their families, their work life, hobbies, and so on. This will help them feel comfortable. It will let them know that you view them as more than just a representative of a minority, that you recognise that they have other aspects of their lives.

★ Make sure you understand any conditions they may have placed on the interview. Clarify whether or not they mind having their name used. Or perhaps they do not mind using a first name, but would prefer that you not mention their last name, their town, or other details that might identify them. Accept their requests and do not try to persuade them otherwise.

★ If you have a choice of where to interview them, decide on a place where they feel comfortable. It is often best to interview people in their own environment—their apartment or office, for example—because that is where they feel most relaxed. It also helps you to understand their perspective because you can experience them in their normal surroundings, and they may reveal things they would not in a more formal or unfamiliar setting.

★ Let them tell you their story in their own way. If they want to start with what happened five or 10 years ago, let them, even if it seems to you that it is not exactly relevant to what you want to know. Try to schedule enough time with them so you do not have to pressure them to get quickly to the point. People often feel more relaxed about discussing something close to their hearts when they have the freedom to speak at length.

★ Write up a list of questions beforehand, but use it as a general guide rather than something you have to stick to strictly. As you ask your questions, you should listen carefully to what they say, so that you are open to other approaches. Be flexible. If you

are too attached to your own ideas of what the interview should be about, you may not recognise those moments when your sources mention important but subtle aspects of the problem that you have not been aware of previously.

★ No matter how different they are from you, do not preach to them about how they should live their lives. If you approach them with a judgmental attitude, they are likely to sense that immediately and will probably not feel comfortable talking to you or trust you to use the information sensitively. They understand their situation much better than you do – which is why you are interested in interviewing them.

★ Try to acknowledge to yourself any biases or prejudices you have about the minority they belong to—and then try to put those ideas aside when interviewing people and preparing your story. If you have a stereotyped perspective of the people you are writing about but do not recognise it, you are likely to demonstrate that bias in both your questions and your writing.

★ Remember that your sources are experts. An expert is not just a doctor or scientist. Your sources are experts on their own lives. Do not assume that you know what they will tell you, because then you won't be open for any surprises. You want them to describe their lives and experience to you – and your job is to convey that to your audience.

★ At the end of the conversation, ask if they know any other people who might be willing to be interviewed. This can be an important method of finding other sources for this or future articles. Of course, the more sensitive you are while interviewing them, the more likely they are to feel comfortable referring you to someone else.

★ Above all, be careful how you use the information. When someone agrees to talk to you, they are doing you a great favour. When you write about them, do so with care and compassion. It is easy to frighten members of your audience when you report about people from a different background by using stereotypes, inflammatory or derogatory language, unverified information, and other biased material. Your role, however, is to help your audience understand other people and empathise with rather than fear them.

3. Ethnicity

Ethnicity

Ethnic divisions clearly played a highly destructive role in the recent wars and conflicts of South East Europe. While religious and other factors also fuelled tensions, it was the perception of people as “other” due to their ethnicity that generated the most violent and aggressive passions—which, in turn, led to the devastating tragedies of the 1990s.

Unfortunately, journalists and their media organisations have frequently found themselves placed in an extremely delicate and sometimes impossible position. As members of a particular ethnic community, they have found it difficult to maintain a stance of journalistic objectivity, often because of overwhelming political and social pressures. Instead, they have often viewed their role as defenders of the interests of their specific ethnic group rather than as observers seeking to understand the full complexities of the situation at hand.

The coverage has often reflected this bias by painting rival ethnic groups as uniformly bloodthirsty, evil, and completely to blame for the conflict. Journalists have routinely perpetuated negative stereotypes, ignored root social and political causes of the conflicts, made no efforts to interview anyone who does not share the majority point of view, and failed to place events in a context that would encourage a broader understanding.

To help journalists hope to play a role in fostering reconciliation and respect for ethnic differences, here are some critical suggestions:

- ★ Never write a story without interviewing people who have a range of positions on the debate. Any material developed solely from one perspective is inherently biased. If your sources criticise an entire ethnic group, representatives of that group should be offered an opportunity to respond to the charges. Otherwise, the journalist simply becomes a propaganda mouthpiece for one side.

- ★ Pay close attention to your choice of words and expressions. Avoid derogatory phrases commonly used to refer to people of other ethnicities. If you quote people who use such expressions, consider paraphrasing them instead of citing them directly. This can be a sensitive area, because some words may be offensive in one language but not in another, so it is part of your job as a journalist to understand the nuances. If you are not sure whether an expression is considered derogatory, ask the people being talked about how they feel about it.

- ★ Develop sources in ethnic communities other than your own. Call up NGOs (non-governmental organisations) representing their interests and ask to meet with them. Ask them about their concerns, hopes, traditions, and fears. Spend time at cultural and social institutions where they gather—community centres, schools, theatres, wherever—and talk to as many people as you can. Immersing yourself in their milieu, how-

ever uncomfortable it may be at first, is the best way to develop a real understanding of their perspective.

★ Look inside yourself so you can recognise any prejudices you yourself may have. Everyone has preconceived notions, whether conscious or not, about members of other social groups. While this is completely understandable, the most effective and accurate reporting depends upon the ability to acknowledge these biases and put them aside. That is the only way to really hear what people are telling you about their lives and feelings.

★ Make sure you place events and situations in context rather than just focusing on who attacked whom yesterday. Nothing happens out of the blue. When ethnic disputes and conflicts erupt, journalists frequently treat each incident as if it has taken place in isolation. But both sides usually have their own interpretations of how matters have arrived at the current moment. In order to present material fairly, you should understand this history and include enough background so that the audience recognises the real complexities.

★ Talk to people on both sides other than those who present themselves as leaders. Often, men, women and children on the ground have a far different view of what is going on than those who presume to speak or act for the entire group. What is it they really want? Ask them if the strategies being pursued in their name are, in their view, the most effective ways to achieve their goals.

★ Focus not just on the visible and obvious effects of ethnic fighting but on the less apparent consequences as well. What kind of long-lasting psychological traumas are taking place? What is the consequence of the conflict in the social and economic spheres? What are the implications for the future of what is taking place today?

★ In your reporting from both sides, try to determine where there is common ground—and then highlight those elements. It is easy to find people willing to demonise those from another ethnic group. But a reporter who digs a little more deeply and asks probing questions may find that, in fact, the goals professed by those on both sides of the divide may not be as different as the people themselves believe.

★ Try focusing on the emotions of non-combatants as well as the actual events on the ground. We are all human, after all, and it is often easier for members of one social group to empathise with the fears and pain of civilians on the other side than with the inflammatory or aggressive statements of generals and politicians. Most people can empathise with the death of a child or parent, with the loss of a home or of a sense of hope.

★ Do not assume that each side has a monolithic reality and that everybody is of one mind. Every community will have dissenters from the majority position. Some people may be afraid to express themselves for fear of reprisals from neighbours, politicians or others. But you should always be aware that other factions exist even in seemingly

cohesive societies—and you should make a concerted effort to find them and present their perspective.

★ Try to describe events accurately and cite the sources of your information instead of relying on inflammatory adjectives like “brutal”, “inhuman”, and “barbaric”. Journalists often fall back on such expressions as a way of demonising one side and, whether intentionally or not, goading the other side to perpetuate the cycle of violence. In doing so, they are generally fulfilling the goals and disseminating the views of just one party to the conflict.

★ Remember to be sceptical. Do not let yourself be used or manipulated by those on either side of the conflict. Check every fact to the fullest extent possible. If you cannot be totally sure whether something is accurate, either do not include the information or attribute it to your source rather than presenting it as the truth. When evaluating what you hear, take into account the source’s reliability in the past. Provide the audience with as much detail as possible about your informants and their motivations so that people can judge for themselves how reliable they might be.

★ Ignore appeals from authorities and others demanding that you demonstrate what they deem sufficient “loyalty” or “ethnic solidarity.” Your role should not be to perpetuate racist stereotypes, act as a cheerleader for one side, or disseminate unconfirmed rumours that could promote extremist actions. Your loyalty and solidarity belong to your audience, for whom you are supposed to be gathering the most thorough and accurate information possible.

★ Many people have strong negative feelings about those from other ethnic groups just because some authorities, politicians, clerics, and others may use offensive terms and expressions when discussing them does not mean you are required, as a journalist, to include this sort of insulting language in your material. If necessary, paraphrase their words. If you decide to quote them directly, you should mention that members of the group being discussed consider such language to be insulting and inflammatory.

Case studies

The case studies included in the following sections offer an analysis of articles gathered by the Media Diversity Institute from Europe and the United States. The articles are accompanied by commentaries that highlight examples of effective and problematic journalistic practices and suggest approaches or guidelines for improving reporting on diversity.

The events described in this article are extremely unclear, with much of the confusion caused by its reliance on stereotypes of the Roma as a thieving and vengeful people. No effort was apparently made to talk to any of the Roma involved or to provide any background on the situation, such as existing ethnic tensions and any aggressive actions taken by the other side.

3. a) **Gypsies attack military police forces with axes**

To describe an event as resembling a revolution is highly inflammatory, especially since the incident involved several dozen Roma, not hundreds or thousands. The phrase is designed to spread fear, not to enlighten readers about what really happened.

This could be true, but it sounds like an oversimplification of a complex situation. Did all 26 really submit their resignations? Did the journalist really hear from all 26 that the reason for their resignations was fear of a Roma desire for revenge, or was that merely an assumption or second-hand information that should be attributed to specific source? Was there an actual threat, or was their fear based on stereotypes of Roma? Why has the journalist not sought out comment from any of the employees and from the Roma as well? Without it, the story has too many holes in it for it to be considered an authoritative account of the incident.

Mass fighting, resembling a revolution, took place in the forests near Botevgrad on Tuesday evening.

About 50 to 60 gypsies, armed with axes, attacked forestry guards and military police at 8.30 p.m. when they realised that their friends and relatives were being caught and arrested for illegally cutting down and stealing trees.

When the military police forces appeared at the site of the incident, they tried to deter the Roma men by firing into the air. The latter, however, not only did not halt their activity but simply started slashing the tires of the police car right in front of the officers' eyes.

Now panic has stricken the town's forestry staff, with all 26 employees submitting their letters of resignation. They say they all fear the Roma men will seek revenge.

24 Hours, Sofia, 29 August 2002.

The headline immediately creates the frightening image of Roma men running around with hatchets, apparently attacking police without provocation. The truth, undoubtedly, is far more complex.

Did everyone have an axe? The story implies that they did. If so, you would have thought that some of the authorities would have been killed, or at least seriously injured. Since the journalist does not mention any injuries, it might be that the incident was far less serious and dangerous than portrayed. The motivation for the Roma action is also confusing. Who exactly was arrested? What exactly did they do? What law did they break? Where were they taken? Were they being held in custody? How did the other Roma suddenly realize, as a group, that this was happening?

Does this mean they did not attack the authorities but merely attacked their cars? Did the officers just stand around and watch as their tires were being slashed? How did the incident end?

This is an excellent example of taking an unusual phenomenon—an advertising campaign targeting the Roma—and turning it into an interesting piece of journalism. It also illustrates that it is possible to write about the Roma in a way that does not focus primarily on stereotypes or on their poor relationships with other ethnic and social groups.

3. b) **Employees of Radio C helped prepare targeted advertising - They like to chat**

For the first time, Matáv considered the Roma a target group

“Do you hear, someone calls you, do you hear brother, find me, if you looked for me. Tell me how you are, tell me everything that you can.” This song has been heard on Radio C for three weeks. On the radio channel for Roma listeners, the Hungarian telecommunications company Matáv advertised its “Csevegő” package.

According to Bálint Nagy, the company’s communications director, it was the first time in Hungary that the Roma community was specifically targeted by an advertising campaign.

Q. Why did you think that it was worth advertising to the Roma?

A. For three reasons. We are talking about 500,000-700,000 people - customers, if you like. It would be a mistake to disregard so many potential customers. On the other hand, Matáv has to look for those social and business sectors of the telecommunications market where it can increase its profits, and these groups have to be approached via an increasingly targeted marketing strategy. The Roma are one of these target groups. Thirdly, we hope and think that the consumer habits and purchasing power of the Roma will follow the rest of society.

Q. If their habits will follow the others, why do they have to be addressed separately?

A. They will follow, but at present their habits are not yet identical.

Q. As a “southern” people, the Roma like to talk more. Is this why you promoted in particular the “Csevegő” package?

A. Employees of Radio C did indeed help select the appropriate product. We also considered

◀ What is the Csevegő package? It would be useful for the journalist to explain.

◀ Nagy’s claim—that this is the first time—might be true, but it would be useful for the journalist to try to verify this statement. In any event, it is a good idea to attribute the claim to Nagy, as the journalist does.

◀ It would be interesting for the journalist to ask specifically how their consumer patterns differ from other groups.

◀ This is one place where the journalist relies on an outmoded stereotype. The Roma may like to talk, as Nagy explains below, but so do many “northern” peoples.

the phone card, but we learned that the Roma use it less frequently. However, they really do communicate for longer; they do not leave out small talk. In their circles it is considered unfriendly when a discussion focuses only on the immediate matter at hand. It is considered proper to talk about other things—for example, to ask after relatives. This is why we thought it is perhaps worthwhile recommending to the Roma our “Csevegő” package, which offers discounts on longer phone calls.

◀ This suggests that members of other groups do not believe in asking after relatives or otherwise making “small talk” when on the telephone — a notion which is clearly untrue

(Magyar Hírlap, Budapest, 22 June 2002)

3. c) Roma war in Szentpál

In Somogyszentpál, the controversy between the Roma and the other inhabitants of the village seems insoluble. The tension is permanent. Most people, particularly from the older population, do not even report anymore when someone breaks into their homes because they are afraid to do so. The local government has attempted to control the situation, yet until now all its attempts have failed.

Dr. Sandor Berenyi, the mayor of Somogyszentpál said: "Until now, the Roma living in the village have demolished several dozen empty houses; there is hardly a cellar that they have not broken into yet; they constantly steal from gardens and from the forest."

The local authority has tried everything to resolve the situation. It contacted the national organisations of ethnic minorities and it also asked the ethnic research group of the Hungarian Academy of Science to investigate the situation of the Roma in Szentpál and to suggest possible solutions. "All for nothing—they come here, look around and acknowledge that the problem is much more severe than anything they have ever seen", said Dr. Sandor Berenyi.

"None of those we have asked so far could give us any guidance as to how to resolve our problems. Now, more than 30% of the population is Roma, and public security is so bad that the entire future development of the village is in jeopardy. This is so despite the fact that there would be work for them in the village and that the local government spends nearly 30 million forints per year on their aid."

People in Somogyszentpál even attempted to form a "civic guard" in order to improve their feeling of security. However, even this did not lead to any improvement. After a few months, nobody was left who was willing to patrol the streets, everybody was too afraid.

◀ This headline is misleading and inflammatory. The problem is not a Roma "war" but apparently a conflict between the Roma and other inhabitants. The headline makes the assumption that the situation is completely the fault of the Roma—and not just individual Roma but the village's entire Roma population.

◀ What is the evidence for this? How can he be sure that the Roma are responsible for all the problems?

◀ Why did the reporter not contact the Hungarian Academy of Science directly to ask about the situation? Why has he not made contact with the Roma themselves to find out their perspective?

◀ What kind of work would there be for them? What efforts have been made to help them? What is the aid that they receive? Answers to these questions would improve the article.

◀ Why? What happened after a few months? Was someone attacked? If not, what changed? Why were they willing to patrol at first but not later?

Dr. Sandor Berenyi said the local government keeps looking for an appropriate solution. However, if they are unsuccessful in the short term, they will resolve the long lasting problem themselves and they will expel from the village the families who cause most of the damage.

Új Néplap, Budapest, 25 January 2002

◀ Is it just a problem with a few families? If so, why is the reporter blaming all the Roma?

Like many similar articles, this one is based on a single source—an 11-year-old boy. While it sounds like what happened to him was extremely unpleasant, the journalist takes him completely at his word without seeking any comment from anyone on the other side. The point is not to challenge aggressively the word of a young boy but to approach every source with at least a bit of scepticism until what they say has been shown to be true.

3. d) They pointed their automatic gun at my head

11-year old Venhar Rexhepi from Ljuboten narrates:

Ljuboten continues to be in the limelight, not only of the domestic public but of the foreign audience as well, after everything that the residents of this village experienced when the retaliating force of Ljube Boskovski terrorized innocent people last year, sparing not even women, children and elders. Killings, the most vicious brutality, robberies and the inhuman behaviour of the police horde—the Ljuboten residents felt it and still feel it, and the consequences of these tortures cannot be erased from the souls of the youngest for a long time.

The case of 11-year old Venhar Rexhepi, whom the police made lie on the ground while they pointed an automatic at his head, will enter the annals of how criminals do not choose their victims.

Now, during these spring days, when everyone is following the events surrounding the exhumation of the 10 victims, a black-haired boy was sitting next to me. His friends were gathered around us and they spontaneously began recounting Venhar's experiences. I began inquiring about what had occurred.

"It was summertime," says the eagle-eyed boy, "and I had to take lunch to my uncle, who was guarding the cattle in the cowshed. There"—he pointed with his hand towards the place where the event had occurred, above the village where the police and army were located—"since they noticed that I was going in the direction of the cowshed, they made me stop, and afterwards they made me lie on the ground. They pointed their automatic at my head, and at the same time began searching my bundle, in which was

◀ The use of words like "inhuman", "vicious" and "horde" can only serve to inflame the situation further. It is far better to describe concretely what happened in unemotional language. It would be helpful here to introduce a comment from a psychologist or trauma specialist about the impact of situations like this on children.

◀ The reporter is obviously making a judgement here, but the meaning of the statement is extremely unclear

◀ In reporting on human rights abuses allegedly perpetrated by one group against another, it is always important to be as balanced as possible, provide some context for the events, and refrain as much as possible from inflammatory words such as 'terrorize,' 'brutality,' and 'torture.' It is best to describe simply the behaviour as plainly as possible, from as many sources as possible, and make every effort to verify what is being recounted. It is also critical to include some background information, such as whether there have been counter-charges of atrocities from the other side. The author of this piece has done none of that.

wrapped bread and other food for my uncle. Since they did not find anything suspicious, the policemen and soldiers let me go in the direction of the cowshed, but they came with me too, following me with their car in case I was taking the food to the NLA fighters. They,” says Venhar, “came with me to the cowshed and once they saw that only my uncle was there, they returned to their ‘base’ above the village, where they had been located six months before the tragedy of Ljuboten took place.”

This is not the only time that Venhar has been a victim of the army police hordes, said his friends. He has experienced other incidents that presented a particular danger to him. Venhar did not appear to want to talk about the other cases, but at the insistence of his friends he agreed. “This was an event that happened earlier,” said Venhar, with a little bit of embarrassment. “I,” continues Venhar, “was returning from the cowshed and had taken some milk to bring home, but my uncle had loaded up my donkey with milk jugs and a dry clump of firewood for baking. When I arrived at the police checkpoint, where the police and the army were stationed, they stopped me, and the soldiers made me unload the firewood and the jugs. They began searching me thoroughly, and also the firewood, which they put on the ground. They must have thought that I was carrying weapons on my donkey, and since they did not find anything they left me to load up the donkey again by myself, and because I was having difficulty, they were laughing at me but did not help me in any way. I was grateful to Haxhi Reshat, who at that moment was passing by and helped me load up my donkey and get out of the sight of the policemen and soldiers, because if I had stayed there any longer, something might have happened to me.”

Flaka, Skopje, 2002

This is a good example of exploiting a tragedy to make a nationalistic point. The article essentially blames the mother involved for her own child's death because she could not speak Macedonian. This incident could have been a trigger for reporting and writing an important and revealing story about cross-cultural communication—and miscommunication—and the dangers that arise when two communities are forced to co-exist. Instead, the journalist feels compelled to note almost half a dozen times that Macedonian is the “official language” of the country, and allows her sources to denigrate the aspirations of the Albanian-speaking minority. Nowhere in the article does anyone express genuine regret at the death of the infant, and no one from the Albanian-speaking community has been asked for their perspective on the matter.

3. e) **Baby dies because the mother did not speak Macedonian and could not communicate with the doctors — When you do not speak the official language**

The patient ought to know that if he does not speak the official language he is putting himself in danger, says Dr. Aleksej Duma, President of the Medic's Chamber.

An infant in critical condition who was recently brought to the clinic for children's diseases died due to precious time lost while the medical staff was unsuccessfully trying to talk to the mother, who did not speak Macedonian. The mother—an ethnic Albanian from Tanusevci—was trying without success to explain what the baby suffered from. Another Albanian woman, who was nearby at the moment, tried to translate, but she also often just shook her head. The mother could not even relate her home address nor where her relatives could be found.

This is just one of many tragedies that occur due to the inability of patients to speak Macedonian, which is the official language of the country.

Aleksej Duma, the president of the Medic's Chamber, says:

“While it is a personal matter if someone knows the language, it is also a necessity in order to get results in practice.”

The position of the European Union is similar, because the doctors' code has been developed with the aid of international experts, Duma says.

◀ What is the Medic's Chamber? Is it an NGO? A government agency? The journalist should identify it and explain its function.

◀ It is unclear what Duma means when he says that the position of the European Union is similar. Its position on

“It is the doctors’ problem if they speak only the language of some of the minority communities, because then they risk not being understood by the patient, but the patient should be also aware that if he does not speak the official language of the country he is putting himself at risk. In order for someone to show that he is a citizen of a given country, he ought to demonstrate that he belongs to that country, and one of the clearest signs is the language,” Duma says. In his opinion, it is incomprehensible for someone to demand citizenship if he cannot speak the official language. In Great Britain, as well as in Slovenia, a doctor is obligated to use the official language, he adds.

The employees at the polyclinic “Bit Pazar” say that they constantly come across patients who do not speak Macedonian.

“Albanian women usually come to the doctor together with their husbands, who sometimes tell us that we ought to learn Albanian because their women cannot speak Macedonian. But we are obligated to treat citizens, not to learn Albanian or any other language, when we all know that the official language in the country is the Macedonian,” says one of the polyclinic employees.

Bajram Nuredinovski, a specialist in internal medicine and owner of a private clinic in Debar, says that he encounters no such problems.

“When I started to work in the medical centre in Debar 27 years ago, I did not speak Albanian, but the nurses assisted me and I did communicate with the patients,” he says. He points out that there is no Macedonian in Debar who cannot speak Albanian, and vice versa.

According to the Fifth Amendment of the Macedonian constitution, the official language in the country is Macedonian, with its Cyrillic alphabet. The same amendment also holds that an official language in the country is one spoken by 20% of the population, but its use is governed by different laws.

what exactly? On whether patients should speak the language of the doctors? Just because Macedonian doctors consulted with Western European ones in developing a code of conduct does not in any way mean that the policies they have settled upon are similar. This appears to be an example of the journalist allowing Duma to say whatever he wants without asking obvious questions.

◀ The issue of citizenship seems to be beside the point here. The issue is how to guarantee that all people receive decent health care and treatment, regardless of ethnicity or language ability. In raising questions of proving citizenship, Duma comes across as extremely unsympathetic and unwilling to seek ways to resolve the problem. In Great Britain as well as other European countries, in fact, hospitals that routinely treat people from different minority populations often seek to employ some members of those communities on staff who can communicate with the patients.

◀ These employees, like Duma, come across as rather insensitive to the plight of the people they are supposed to be treating. The journalist should have explored whether any steps have been taken to address the problem, such as employing bilingual doctors and nurses or even ethnic Albanians.

◀ It is good that the journalist included Nuredinovski, who provides a somewhat different perspective. Clearly, some professionals are bilingual and have recognised the importance of learning how to communicate with patients who do not speak Macedonian rather than maintaining that they have no right to expect citizenship.

◀ If this statement is true, does that mean that Albanian is also an official language? Apparently, other languages can also be recognised as official ones. This undermines the premise of the article, which is that Albanians who want medical care must learn to speak Macedonian. It would have been helpful if the journalist had provided addition-

Tomorrow, the Ministry of Justice will review the working versions of one of the main and several auxiliary laws that concern the use of the languages of minority communities.

Dnevnik, Skopje, 2002

al information about the rights guaranteed to those who speak minority languages in Macedonia.

◀ What laws, exactly, will the ministry be reviewing? Would they have had an impact on the outcome of the situation described in this article? Why are they being reviewed? What is the time frame for any decisions or results arising from the review? Again, this statement is intriguing but is so vague that it provides the reader with virtually no additional information.

This story is a good example of seeking comment across an ethnic divide, but at the same time it fails to provide opposing political comments. The reporter includes the testimony of both Romanian and Hungarian students criticising the decision to segregate schools by language but does not allow political and education leaders to defend their decision in the first place.

3. f) Pupils reject ethnic divisions

Bucharest — Pupils in the ethnically mixed Bolyaj Farkas high school, from the Romanian town of Targu Mures, gave a veritable lecture urging the school authorities and their parents to be tolerant: they refused to accept a decision to have classes held exclusively in Hungarian this school year, meaning that the pupils of Romanian ethnicity should move to other schools.

“I do not want to feel like a foreigner in my own country,” says Ioan Pop, 16, a Romanian, whereas his classmate, Verestoy Erica, 17, a Hungarian, believes that the right to an education in one’s mother tongue can be provided under a single roof, within existing curricula.”

“Nobody can tell me why my friends have to move out of the school simply because they are Romanian. We have not had a single incident in this school, nor have we ever paid attention to whether someone is Romanian or Hungarian. And what will we achieve by having the school turned into a Hungarian-language high school? Will we know and learn more?” Erica asks.

Both Romanian and Hungarian pupils are against the decision to turn their school into an exclusively Hungarian-language facility and protested for days, forcing the authorities to delay changes until the end of the year. The protests caused reactions and divisions countrywide, even provoking a dispute between the ruling Social Democratic Party and its only political ally in the Parliament, the Democratic Alliance of Hungarians in Romania.

It all began when a protocol on cooperation between the two parties was concluded at the local level in Targu Mures. The agreement, which was immediately accepted by the local education authorities, envisaged that the ethnically mixed

◀ This is an effective headline because it clearly states, without excessive emotionalism, the story’s essential point.

◀ How exactly did they protest? How did the nationwide divisions manifest themselves? Were there protests at other schools? In addition, the story makes it seem like every single student was against this proposal, but surely some favoured it. If so, why? They should also have a right to comment.

◀ This makes it sound like it was a local decision, but the story later implies that the same policy was to be followed nationwide. Which is it?

Bolyaj Farkas high school would start the new school year as a Hungarian-language educational facility. Also planned was the relocation of the Romanian-language classes to two other high schools that will be exclusively Romanian. Since the two other schools are also mixed, the Hungarian-language classes from them were to be transferred to the Bolyaj Farkas school.

The decision was first rejected by Romanian pupils. Soon, however, they were joined by their Hungarian colleagues, who were also unable to understand why their friends from the same school were now supposed to move to another building. Thus, the pupils of the Targu Mures high school together refused to be the victims of an inter-party agreement.

The protests alarmed the local school and political authorities.

Politicians initially tried to explain the reasons for their decision. But the pupils rejected all of the explanations, and firmly opposed the planned ethnic segregation.

The problem spread out of the school and was picked up by the Romanian public, and even the president, Ion Illiescu, and the prime minister, Adrian Nastase, had to make statements on the matter. President Illiescu said the pupils were right and that a democratic, multi-ethnic and multi-cultural society could not be successfully built by segregating people in ethnic ghettos.

The Democratic Alliance of Hungarians in Romania, however, insisted that the protocol on the division of schools and pupils ought to be respected.

A compromise was reached envisaging that all students enrolled in the ethnically mixed schools would finish school where they started, amid great pressure by the pupils and the public. After the protest, the public was more inclined to think that the right to an education in one's maternal language does not imply the ethnic division of schools and pupils.

Despite this, there have been no changes in the enrolment policy. The pupils of Romanian and Hungarian ethnicity will be directed to schools in which classes will be held in either of

◀ In what way did it alarm them? Why is none of them quoted?

◀ Again, the story should include statements from the political parties or local officials about why they made this agreement. Unless the story includes their explanations, it is difficult for readers to determine whether any of them make sense or not.

◀ This would be more effective with a direct quote from the president. For example, in the paraphrase, the reporter uses the word "ghetto," which has specific cultural and historical associations. But it is not clear whether the president actually used this word or expressed himself in less forceful language.

◀ Again, what exactly is the party's rationale for the protocol? It would be helpful to know.

◀ On what basis has the reporter determined that the public has changed its mind? Is this based on polling data, anecdotal evidence, or simply wishful thinking? We are not given enough information to judge.

the two languages. In Romania, in accordance with EU regulations, there are already schools in which courses are organised only in minority languages. Thus, 55 schools now exist in which the classes are given in Hungarian, German, Serbian, and other minority languages.

Jula Ilona, 18, a Hungarian, asks how is it possible that grown-ups can fiercely advocate a single “European roof” for all countries and peoples on the continent, while at the same time opposing a “common roof” in the Bolyaj Farkas high school. Contradictions like this, according to her classmate, Aurel Neamtu, 18, a Romanian, will last until the younger generations take over in their respective countries, across a united Europe. The protest has also shown that young people are strong enough to oppose harmful and nonsensical decisions by politicians.

Beta/MDI, Belgrade/London, 3 September 2002

◀ Again, it is extremely useful to include quotes from students of both ethnicities. But the journalist editorialises at the end by referring to the “harmful and nonsensical decisions” of politicians while not providing readers with information that would help them judge the truth of that statement.

3. g) Romanies like beans, the rest they sell as swill

Food in the Smederevo relief kitchen has become the object of trade

▲ The headline immediately makes clear that this is an anti-Roma article, but the article itself offers little evidence to back up the claim and provides no response from the Roma themselves.

► How does he know this? Who is providing him with this information? Is this happening all the time, or is he exaggerating the extent of the problem in order to denigrate the Roma?

► If this is happening so much, why has the Red Cross not been able to identify the offenders?

Smederevo — Complaints about the quality of food in the Smederevo relief kitchen addressed to the city's Red Cross organisation and mostly focusing on the menu's blandness have led to an unusual and highly irregular kind of trade.

Radmila Brankovic, secretary of the local Red Cross organisation, explains that the Romanies sell pig farmers the meals they get as humanitarian aid.

“Romanies eat the beans, while all the other meals with pasta, which are served most frequently, are sold even if they contain things like fish.

“The most important thing for them is to get bread. The socially disadvantaged cannot receive bread unless they take a cooked meal too”, Radmila Brankovic told us.

We have learned that the people engaged in this trade will lose their right to relief coupons if Red Cross workers establish their identity.

The Red Cross cannot cater for the needs of all the people wishing to use the kitchen and, in this way, aid will start reaching those who really need it.

Blic, Belgrade, 20-21 January 2001

◀ It is unclear what the complaints about the quality of the food have to do with the issue of Roma selling what they get. In fact, the journalist never returns to the subject of the food's blandness. If it is indeed of poor quality, that helps explain why Roma might sell it, rather than eat it themselves

◀ If this is true, perhaps they are selling the food so they can purchase something more to their liking. A good question for the journalist to ask is whether the Red Cross is providing the kind of food that most of the recipients are accustomed to eating. If not, why not?

◀ This suggests that the Romanis do not need the aid and that, in fact, it is their fault that other families are not getting it. The effect is to increase the resentment that other families feel toward the Romani.

This joke relies for its humour on classic stereotypes about the Roma. In doing so, it suggests that Roma mothers are not only willing to use their children to generate sympathy while begging but that they are even eager to sell them for the right sum. The joke thus exploits a tragic situation to reinforce prejudice against an entire ethnic group. There are many cultural and economic factors that lead some Roma to resort to begging, but one reason they bring their children along is because they believe it is scandalous for mothers to leave them in day care settings without a family member present to protect them.

3. h) Joke

Dobriła

A man walks out of a building and encounters a Gypsy woman with a small child.

“Kind sir, give me five dinars for little Dobriła,” she begged

“Get lost,” he retorted angrily.

The next day at the same time he walks out of the building and runs into the same Gypsy woman with the same child...

“Kind sir, give me five dinars for little Dobriła,” she begged again.

The man felt sorry for her and handed her a five-dinar bill.

“Here, take Dobriła,” the Gypsy woman said, handing him the child.

Publika, Podgorica , 22 December 2001

4. Religion

Religion

Religious differences have arguably led to as much conflict, in South East Europe as well as all over the world, as ethnic prejudice. In fact, it can be difficult to distinguish between the two because warring ethnic groups are, as often as not, members of different religions. In Kosovo, for example, are the tensions between Serbs and Albanians based on ethnicity or religion? Separating the two is tricky at best. Undoubtedly, the answer is that both factors play a role.

The same can be said, as well, of anti-Semitism. Hatred of Jews clearly has both ethnic and religious components. Jews are often viewed as members of an alien race who are defined by certain physical and personality stereotypes, such as hooked noses and an ability to earn money in questionable ways. At the same time, anti-Semites have always mocked Judaism as a religion and spread false rumours about the faith's religious practices and beliefs, such as the notion that Jews seek Christian babies to sacrifice.

The situation in South East Europe has become more complicated in recent years with respect to religion. Not only are formerly closed societies struggling to maintain a sense of mutual understanding between members of religious groups long-established in the region, but missionaries arriving from the West and seeking to convert people to other spiritual traditions have further complicated the picture.

The following are some suggestions on covering religion in a way that helps promote tolerance rather than conflict:

- ★ To identify gaps in coverage, look back at how your media outlet has addressed questions of religious difference in your city or region. Has there been any material including the perspective of those who do not belong to the dominant religion? When other religions have been written about, has the presentation been fair and balanced, or has it perpetuated stereotypes that may have little to do with reality?

- ★ When writing about religion, pay close attention to the language you use to describe other people. You may not consider some words derogatory, but they may be offensive to the members of the group you are writing about. If you are not certain whether or not a word is insulting be sure to check before you use it.

- ★ Take the time to find out about newer religions in your region. Spend a day with Mormon missionaries or with Jehovah's Witnesses. Observe their interactions with the people they speak to and try to convert. You do not have to share their beliefs to report about them accurately and with a sense of understanding and empathy.

★ Write about the laws governing religion in your region. Does the state offer privileges to the dominant faith and discriminate against others? If all religions are supposed to be treated equally under the law, do the authorities actually behave in that way, or do they still favour their own spiritual tradition?

★ Be careful not simply to repeat common stereotypes about people of other religions. When it comes to religion, many self-styled “experts” will say whatever they like about other spiritual traditions without feeling a need to back up their statements with facts. Because journalists often share those prejudices, they may need to remind themselves that their job is to challenge such statements, not accept them without question.

★ Find out if any universities in your area have religious studies departments. If so, cultivate the professors there as potential sources. If they have a genuine expertise in more than one spiritual tradition, they may be particularly well suited to answering difficult questions about inter-faith relationships.

★ Beware of sources who base their arguments on religious topics solely on quotations from the Bible, the Koran, or other sacred texts. Legitimate differences in interpretations of words written many centuries ago always exist-which is why there are so many Christian denominations, for example, or radically varying Islamic traditions. If a politician seeks to use a religious text as the foundation for public policy, find out how others interpret the same text-and ask the politician tough questions about it.

★ Address religious questions in the context of other social, political and economic developments or trends. If unemployment among members of a particular religious group is high, for example, it may reflect hard times in their traditional line of business rather than laziness. If a new religion seems to be attracting many followers, explore what it might be offering people that they feel they currently lack.

★ Write articles exploring whether the standard stereotypes reflect reality-and if they do, why that might be. For example, it is true that some Jews historically worked as money-lenders specifically because other professions were closed to them, a situation that could certainly have reinforced the impression that they were greedy or at least clever with money.

★ Write about the holidays of other religious traditions the same way you cover your own. Attend a Passover Seder, a Chanukah service or a bar mitzvah, for example. Spend the day with Muslims who are fasting during Ramadan.

★ Do not treat one member of a religious group as representative of all of them. Just because one Buddhist meditates facing the sun does not mean that all of them do. Each person is an individual and should be allowed to express individual opinions and ideas. Everyone may approach their faith in a slightly different way.

* When interviewing people of different faiths, do not assume that their lives begin and end with their religion. Ask them questions about other topics as well. Just as you probably have needs, concerns, problems and joys that have nothing to do with your faith, so do they. Ask them about their families, interests, professions and other aspects of their lives. You do not need to include everything, of course, but it will help you gain a greater understanding of their perspective.

Case studies

This article is an example of the many violently anti-Muslim pieces that appeared in the U.S. press after September 11, 2001. Since it is written as an opinion piece rather than an objectively reported account, it is not surprising that the author would express her perspective. But being a columnist should not be interpreted as having the right to ignore all norms of civility. The aggressive and extremist tone makes this an unmistakable example of hate speech—even taking into account the horror of the terrorist attack. The author, a well-known right-wing journalist and commentator, certainly makes no effort to present any sort of context, anything that would explain or frame the background behind Muslim hostility toward the west in general and the U.S. in particular.

4. a) **This Is War: We should invade their countries.**

Barbara Olson kept her cool. In the hysteria and terror of hijackers herding passengers to the rear of the plane, she retrieved her cell phone and called her husband, Ted, the solicitor general of the United States. She informed him that he had better call the FBI, the plane had been hijacked. According to reports, Barbara was still on the phone with Ted when her plane plunged in a fiery explosion directly into the Pentagon.

Barbara risked having her neck slit to warn the country of a terrorist attack. She was a patriot to the very end.

This is not to engage in the media's typical hallucinatory overstatement about anyone who is the victim of a horrible tragedy. The furtive cell phone call was an act of incredible daring and panache. If it were not, we would be hearing reports of a hundred more cell phone calls. (Even people who swear to hate cell phones carry them for commercial air travel.)

The last time I saw Barbara in person was about three weeks ago. She generously praised one of my recent columns and told me I had really found my niche. Ted, she said, had taken to reading my columns aloud to her over breakfast.

I mention that to say three things about Barbara. First, she was really nice. A lot of people on TV seem nice, but are not. (And some who do not seem nice, are.) But Barbara was always her charming, graceful, ebullient self. "Nice" is an

◀ Barbara Olsen was a prominent conservative writer and political observer who frequently appeared on TV to support President Bush. Ted, her husband, is a prominent official in the Bush administration.

◀ In fact, within days of the September 11 attacks, it became clear that many of the passengers on board the four hijacked airplanes used their cell phones to call loved ones.

◀ This round-about way of paying herself a compliment does nothing to bolster the author's argument. In fact, it is so self-serving that it detracts from the points she is trying to make.

amazingly rare quality among writers. In the opinion business, bitter, jealous hatred is the norm. Barbara had reason to be secure.

Second, it was actually easy to imagine Ted reading political columns aloud to Barbara at the breakfast table. Theirs was a relationship that could only be cheaply imitated by Bill and Hillary, the latter being a subject of Barbara's appropriately biting bestseller, "Hell to Pay." Hillary claimed preposterously in the Talk magazine interview that she discussed policy with Bill while cutting his grapefruit in the morning. Ted and Barbara really did talk politics and really did have breakfast together.

It is "Ted and Barbara" just like it is Fred and Ginger, and George and Gracie.

They were so perfect together, so obvious, that their friends were as happy they were on their wedding day. This is more than the death of a great person and patriotic American. It is a human amputation.

Third, since Barbara's compliment, I have been writing my columns for Ted and Barbara. I am always writing to someone in my head. Now I do not know who to write to. Ted-and-Barbara were a good muse.

Apart from hearing that this beautiful light has been extinguished from the world, only one other news flash broke beyond the numbingly omnipresent horror of the entire day. That evening, CNN reported that bombs were dropping in Afghanistan and then updated the report to say they weren't our bombs.

They should have been ours. I want them to be ours.

This is no time to be precious about locating the exact individuals directly involved in this particular terrorist attack. Those responsible include anyone anywhere in the world who smiled in response to the annihilation of patriots like Barbara Olson.

We do not need long investigations of the forensic evidence to determine with scientific accuracy the person or persons who ordered this specific attack. We do not need an "international coalition." We do not need a study on "terror-

It has been an article of faith among conservatives that the marriage of Bill and Hillary Clinton has been based more on joint political and career ambitions than on love or affection. To bring the Clintons into the discussions here seems to be more a function of an obsession with them than a way of furthering her argument

Dancer-actors Fred Astaire and Ginger Rogers made many movies together in the 1930s. George Burns and Gracie Allen were a popular TV Comedy team in the 1950s. To compare these extremely famous and talented couples with Barbara and Ted Olsen is such an exaggerated claim that it raises serious doubts about the author's credibility.

Again, this sort of war-mongering, which was a common American response to the terrorist attacks, is a clear example of how the media sometimes acts to inflame public opinion rather than to seek legitimate solutions.

ism.” We certainly did not need a congressional resolution condemning the attack this week.

The nation has been invaded by a fanatical, murderous cult. And we welcome them. We are so good and so pure we would never engage in discriminatory racial or “religious” profiling.

People who want our country destroyed live here, work for our airlines, and are submitted to the exact same airport shakedown as a lumberman from Idaho. This would be like having the Wehrmacht immigrate to America and work for our airlines during World War II. Except the Wehrmacht was not so bloodthirsty.

“All of our lives” do not need to change, as they keep prattling on TV. Every single time there is a terrorist attack or a plane crashes because of pilot error Americans allow their rights to be contracted for no purpose whatsoever.

The airport kabuki theatre of magnetometers, asinine questions about whether passengers “packed their own bags,” and the hostile, lumpen mesomorphs ripping open our luggage somehow allowed over a dozen armed hijackers to board four American planes almost simultaneously on Bloody Tuesday. (Did those fabulous security procedures stop a single hijacker anyplace in America that day?)

Airports scrupulously apply the same laughably ineffective airport harassment to Suzy Chapstick as to Muslim hijackers. It is preposterous to assume every passenger is a potential crazed homicidal maniac. We know who the homicidal maniacs are. They are the ones cheering and dancing right now.

We should invade their countries, kill their leaders and convert them to Christianity. We weren’t punctilious about locating and punishing only Hitler and his top officers. We carpet-bombed German cities; we killed civilians. That’s war. And this is war.

National Review, Universal Press Syndicate,
Washington D.C. 13 September 2001

◀ She is using sarcasm here to criticise people opposed to racial profiling, which involves the slinging out those of a particular ethnic appearance for special security screening. That, of course, violates the American ideal of equal treatment under the law.

◀ It is hard to imagine how anyone could seek to downplay the bloodthirstiness of the Wehrmacht, even given the horror of the September 11 attacks.

What she is saying here is that everyone in the United States who looks like they might be an Arab or Muslim should be treated as guilty until proven innocent-but that everyone else should be given a free pass. The author has clearly forgotten that the U.S. has home-grown terrorists and “homicidal maniacs,” such as Oklahoma city bomber Timothy Mc Veigh.

◀ It is hard to know how seriously to take what she is saying here. Does she really believe we should invade and convert “them”? From the tone, it sounds like she actually does. What she is advocating, of course, is not just rooting out the terrorists responsible for the attacks but conducting a wide-scale assault on an entire religion and civilization, which would clearly violate international law.

This is a good example of the media allowing a religious leader to denounce an entire category of people in the harshest terms without offering members of the group an opportunity to respond. The Metropolitan has a right to express his opinion, but gay people also have a right to respond to charges directed against them.

4. b) Metropolitan Denounces Homosexuality

Cetinje — The Metropolitan of Montenegro and the Littoral, Amfilohije, has said that in Montenegro homosexuality was always considered “the most shameful” of things. Homosexuality is something “that we Montenegrins have always avoided thinking about, let alone talking about,” he declared in the programme “Children of the Apocalypse — Children of Revelation,” broadcast by Radio Svetigora on the occasion of the publication of a photograph of an “open homosexual act” in the Podgorica daily “Pobjeda”.

The Metropolitan assessed this as an “extension of the 1997 Biennial which gave rise to a shamelessness that is now considered normal” and that “it is something that borders on the Satanism the Church has had to fight since time immemorial”. Metropolitan Amfilohije warned that the aim of amoralism in the homosexual propaganda that appeared in “Pobjeda” was to “ridicule the sacredness of human existence and, in the final analysis, to bring humankind to the brink of disaster and self-destruction.”

Blic, Belgrade, 24 July 2000

◀ The phrase “open homosexual act” is inflammatory. Was it actually a photo of two men having sex, or was it simply a photo of two men kissing or holding hands?

◀ Reporters should ask the Metropolitan how exactly homosexuality ridicules the sacredness of existence and brings humankind to the brink of disaster.

5. Gender

Gender

As societies in the Balkans have changed in the past 10 years, so have the roles of women. But to judge from some of the recent magazines and other publications targeting women, you would think their only interests have to do with clothes, cosmetics, decorating and cooking. Certainly after the deprivations they-and everyone else-suffered until the past decade, it is understandable that the availability of a range of goods to choose from should be appealing, but many women undoubtedly have a much broader range of interests.

If a woman is not portrayed as a goddess of domesticity and fashion, she is most likely to appear in the media as a prostitute or a victim in some other way. Again, while prostitution and trafficking in women are serious problems, it is important to cover women's lives in all their diversity, the way men's lives are. Here are some tips to help you do that:

- ★ Women should not appear only in stories specifically about women's problems or issues. Make sure to include women as sources whenever possible. If you are writing about an artistic trend, find a woman artist or two to comment on it. If you are writing about a political debate in your city or region, try to find a woman politician to quote. The point is not to include women in an artificial way but to at least be aware of the value of offering them an opportunity to voice their perspective on a broad range of issues.

- ★ Review the list of regular sources and contacts that you routinely call when developing ideas and writing stories. If the list is completely or predominantly comprised of men, take conscious steps to broaden it. Although men tend to be over-represented in many areas of academia, business, politics and cultural life, it may be easier than you think to identify women who can serve your needs just as well.

- ★ When you include women, describe them the same way you would describe men. If you do not generally describe the clothes or hairstyle of a businessman, do not discuss the clothes and hairstyle of a businesswoman, unless it is somehow relevant to the story. Avoid vague words like "feminine," which carry a lot of associations and can be interpreted differently by everyone. Use specific details to explain what you mean. Does she walk gracefully? Speak softly?

- ★ Be careful not to make assumptions in your stories about women's proper role. Journalists often share society's stereotypes about women and men and reinforce them even without meaning to. Not all women are interested in fashion and cooking. Many women are deeply involved in a society's most pressing political and social problems. Some women start and run highly successful businesses. Seek out women whose lives run counter to the common perception of who women are and should be.

★ Meet with members of women's organisations and ask them about their concerns. There may be issues they consider important that neither you nor your editors are aware of. Encourage them to call you when they think they have something newsworthy to discuss. But do not take what they say as the final word, and do not assume that all women's organisations will tell you the same things. Others are likely to have different opinions, and your material should take those ideas into account as well.

★ Consider writing stories about issues—such as domestic violence and sexual harassment—that have been widely covered in the West but have not received a lot of attention in post-Communist societies. These are both extremely serious problems that have generally been ignored or downplayed by the legal system as well as the media. Domestic violence is often considered a private family matter rather than a crime, even when it results in serious injuries. Explore how it is treated in your city or region. Does the law protect women from being beaten by their husbands or spouses? How do the police and other authorities respond? Are there shelters where women and children can seek help?

★ Sexual harassment in the workplace is another issue that has received a great deal of attention in the West. While some people trivialise the issue, the fact is that women in all societies are sometimes confronted with demands for sexual favours from male co-workers and supervisors in exchange for promotions and pay-rises or under the threat of being dismissed. Sometimes the harassment takes the form not of a direct request for sex but of vulgar, derogatory, or taunting sexual language being directed toward the woman, a situation that can make the workplace a highly unpleasant place to be. Again, find out what the laws are in your region. How big a problem is it? How are women fighting it?

★ The issue of prostitution is a major one when it comes to media portrayals of women. It is obviously important to cover the topic, but in doing so it is also critical to try to suspend judgement of women for whom this may be the only way to make a living. Even if a woman has chosen prostitution and not been forced into it, try to understand the world from her perspective. And make an effort to look beyond the stereotypes. Not all prostitutes are drug addicts. Not all are terrible mothers.

★ In some countries, prostitutes have adopted the term “sex worker” as a less derogatory way of referring to themselves. Ask them why they prefer that phrase and write an article about what the change means. Are prostitutes, or sex workers, trying to create their own organisations and associations? Are they advocating for better health care for themselves or seeking to disseminate information about how to protect themselves from HIV and other sexually transmitted diseases?

★ Trafficking of women has also become a major issue in recent years. Explore the situation in your region. Where are the women coming from? How are they being lured from their home countries, and how are they being forced to stay? Talk to non-governmental organisations working on the issue and ask them to connect you with women who find themselves in that kind of situation.

Case studies

Journalists often make fun of women who call themselves feminists, so this article is a good example of how to present women's concerns without ridiculing those involved. The issue of how women are presented in advertising campaigns is important because it influences social perceptions of all women, and here the journalist takes the complaints and the protest actions seriously.

5. a) **Feminists cover posters with graffiti**

Posters featuring naked women are the worst possible way to advertise meat products, says a participant in "operation graffiti."

Reply to Gavrilovic's poor taste

"Who needs a boyfriend, when you have Gavrilovic," "Chop it, sweetheart," "Paedophilia is not art," "Dimitrije, is this your mother?" as well as some explicitly mentioning the male sexual organ are the graffiti of Zagreb feminists who under cover of night "decorated" posters advertising Gavrilovic products-the work of prominent Croatian artists.

The posters featuring naked women have already drawn considerable public attention and both positive and negative comments. The group of Zagreb feminists used spray-cans to express their disgust at this sexist exploitation of a woman's body.

"Three of our best-known artists have, under the guise of art, chosen the worst possible way of advertising meat products and have portrayed the female body as a kind of meat. The famous signatures on the posters were probably intended by those who launched the campaign to lend credibility to the advertisements because who could question the masterpieces of famous artists? The authors obviously were not aware that their advertisements would be taken literally," says a 25 year-old student who took part in "operation graffiti," adding that the posters would look all right in an art gallery, but as advertisements they are disgusting.

◀ The article would benefit from a more exact description of the posters and what is being advertised. In addition, by referring to the posters as "this exploitation of a woman's body", the journalist is in effect indicating agreement with the feminist rather than just describing their point of view. In fact, the journalist should have interviewed one or more of the artists as well as someone from Gavrilovic and asked them about the charge that the ad campaign was sexist.

It would be better to include her name, because otherwise it comes across as if she is ashamed of her actions. If she does not want to name herself because she is afraid of being prosecuted, the journalist should include some information about what laws regulate this and what the punishment might be.

The young women wished to attract public attention because they believe that people are not concerned that women are being presented as objects.

“This is not vandalism, we wish to show that no-one has the right to advertise in this primitive way,” the female journalist said.

Jutarnji list, Zagreb, 16 May 2002

This article gives voice to women who do not often find themselves represented in the media. It accomplishes this without being excessively emotional or melodramatic, allowing the women to emerge, for the most part, as individuals with specific problems and dilemmas rather than as stereotypes. The article would benefit greatly, however, from some additional details about the centre itself, the women's experiences and the broader social context of domestic violence.

5. b) **Women — Victims of Domestic and Marital Violence: Bruised Bodies and Scarred Souls**

Skopje — When Rizida Bekirova of Skopje married eight years ago, she was a happy and content young woman who could not imagine that she would end up in the small and dilapidated Skopje Women's Centre, the only one of its kind in Macedonia.

"I got married at the age of 17. The first couple of months were fine. When our first child was born, however, my husband started drinking and gambling. If he lost, he would come home angry and beat me. He would strike me all over my body, I would spit out blood, and vomit." 25-year-old Rizida relates her story to us in one of the centre's small, simply furnished rooms. A shabby carpet covers the floor.

"A few days ago, he beat me up again, he hit my abdomen repeatedly, injuring my stomach, I bled for days. After several days of confinement, I managed to escape from the house and reach the Centre," she says.

The Centre opened one year ago, but the Macedonian government hardly finances it at all. Foreign embassies are the main donors. "The conditions are poor because we have only minimal funding," says manager Daniela Dabevska. The Centre has three employees, who were previously volunteers. They now receive small salaries.

"Over 60 women from around Macedonia seek help here every year. Their ethnic background, social status, education, and age varies. They can call us any time they want, our tele-

Both the headline and sub-head successfully convey the essence of the article without inflammatory or sensational language. Even someone who read only the headline and not the entire article would understand that the journalist is treating the subject seriously and considers it a major social problem.



What is the annual budget? Does the government contribute anything? How much do foreign embassies give? How was the centre founded in the first place?



She mentions the varied background of the women who come, but it would be good to know in a bit more detail



phone is available in the media. The location of the Centre is released with discretion because we do not want the husbands to know where their wives are. Husbands have threatened to kill us all when they come for their wife," Dabevska says.

The centre can only accommodate 20 women with children. There they eat food which they prepare themselves, accommodation and medical assistance, and the help of psychologists, social workers and attorneys. The centre has simple rooms with up to three beds. Dabevska says the majority of women that come to the centre, 72%, are abused by their husbands. The rest are victims of parental violence or their boyfriends. 61% of the women are physically abused, 10% sexually, while the rest are subjected to psychological torture.

While she tells her story, Rizida occasionally starts shaking and cries. "My husband is a drunk and a gambler, he does not care for the children. I do not work, and my husband will not allow it. Whatever he earns, he spends, and the children and I have nothing to eat. We have nowhere to go, no relatives, and we live with his mother who cannot help us because he beats her as well. The worst thing is that he beats the children. My younger, three-and-a-half-year-old son, Dzaner, has already had his nose broken by his father. He slammed him into walls and the ground, threw him around the room, I have no idea how the child lived through it," she says through tears. She shows us bruises and wounds from the beatings.

"I ran away from him several times, only to come back. I have no money, no education, no apartment, nowhere to go and that was why I went back, I did not want my children to have to beg on the street," she says.

Women can spend a year at the centre, according to regulations. This is because of the growing number of women seeking help, and the limited resources. Rizida has come to the centre for the second time this year. She hopes she will find a job that pays enough to sustain her and her three children. "I will never go back to him again," she vows.

Andrijana M. is 23 years old. As a child, she was sexually abused by her stepfather, only to

who they are, as well as some information about domestic violence in general. Are there any statistics indicating how common it is in Macedonia? Is it believed to be more common among some social groups? Has the centre worked with international NGOs involved in women's rights issues?

◀ What constitutes psychological torture? Also, these figures make it sound like no one is subjected to all three forms of violence at the same time, which clearly cannot be the case.

◀ How old are her other children? How has the violence affected them, psychologically as well as physically? How, exactly, did she manage to get away? How far is she from her home? Does her husband have any idea where she is? How did she find out about the centre? These sorts of additional details would help make her story come alive for the reader.

become a victim of marital violence later in life. She has a scar on her face and several of her teeth are missing. Her hands are blue.

“I was only nine years old when my stepfather began sexually abusing me. He did this for years in the most brutal fashion. My mother did not want to believe me when I told her what was going on. I think that she dared not say anything, partly because of the shame, and partly because my stepfather beat her as well. When I was 14, I managed to get into a centre for children. I married four years later and that was when my life turned into a new hell. For the first four months, my marriage was good. Then my husband began drinking and insulting me, he abused me and beat me if I would refuse to give him money and alcohol. I have no children, and never will. When I was five-months pregnant, he hit me so hard that I lost the child and the ability to have children,” she says.

“I live in a village where everyone knows each other or is related and no one will take my side. No one wants to go against my husband. I had nowhere to go. Going back to my mother and stepfather was not an option. I think that I would kill him now. I could not stay at home, because my husband would beat me. This is why I have come to the centre,” Andrijana explains. She claims police knew her husband was beating her, but never arrested him.

Life has been hard for Andrijana, everything seems to be going wrong. Apart from being battered and abused, she is no longer entitled to social or health insurance because the law says that only one member of the family can have it. All of the money, of course, goes to her husband. “When my husband beats me, I have to ask him for money and my medical card to prove that I have insurance. He never gives it to me. Never, even when I was hurt the most, when I bled for a long time. I was left without money, with bruises and injuries, and without access to medical care,” Andrijana says.

V.N. was married for 20 years. She asks us for total anonymity because she is afraid that her husband will hunt her down. She does not want

◀ Are her teeth missing because of beatings? Many people in the region have teeth missing for reasons having nothing to do with this. If her missing teeth are not related to the beating, it is a little misleading to include that detail in this context.

◀ Is Andrijana’s description of the situation with social and health insurance accurate? Or is it her interpretation of the situation? This calls for an explanation from the journalist or an expert who can explain exactly what the law entails.

to take any risks after what she has been through and also does not want people to know what happened in the marriage. She has three children and her husband is a high-stakes gambler.

“He would take up to 50,000 German Marks and bring me along to the casino. I would have to say a number that he would then bet on. If he won, he was happy. The problem was when I would not guess the number. Then the horror would start. He would slap me and beat me with his fists. On several occasions, he slashed me with a knife or razor, pulled my hair. It will never grow back in several places,” she says.

Her husband treated her daughters in similar fashion. “The most terrible thing was when I was pregnant, he would hit me in the stomach, I do not know how my son survived. One year ago, I managed to run away somehow. When I arrived, I fell into bed and could not get up for three months. After being pressured by my social worker, my husband signed a paper entitling me to half of our property and promised that he would not beat me. I returned because of the children. He did not keep his promise. The last time he beat me, I requested a divorce. I just want to start a new life,” she says.

The centre says that V.N. is one of the few women that manage to get away from their husbands and break off with them completely. “We cannot tell a woman to stay or not to stay with her husband. It is their right to decide what they will do in life. I would like it the most if I could tell them never to return to their husbands, but I have no right to interfere in their lives. Even more so because we can not promise them a job or guarantee money,” Dabevska says. She believes that the biggest problem is that only a small number of these women reach the centre. The others mostly stay in their domestic agony.

Psychologist Tamara Markovska says physical violence against women is particularly common in the Balkans. “Women are often financially dependent on men. They do not have apartments of their own, and they cannot return to their parents. In addition to this, family affairs are still regarded as something that should stay private in

◀ Did he really slash her head so severely in several places that her hair will not grow back? This is an example of a sympathetic source making a statement that may or may not be completely accurate. If a reporter senses that someone is exaggerating or is advancing an explanation that does not completely make sense, it is best to question the person a little more to clear up the questions, check the accuracy with an expert or leave out the questionable claim rather than accepting it at face value.

◀ What percentage of the centre’s visitors return to their husbands? What percentage manage to find jobs, settle happily on their own, remarry and so on? What are the laws regarding divorce, division of property, and so on? Do the laws make it especially difficult for women to achieve independence? If so, are any politicians or NGOs working to change the laws?

the Balkans. There is also the cult of the male. In former war zones or conflict zones, which are infested with crime, police do little in cases of domestic violence. They always think that there are more important matters to attend to," Markovska says.

Markovska says husbands who beat on their wives are mostly neurotics and deranged people who need medical help. "Women who have been harassed should not expect that any of them will get better without psychological treatment. They must understand that they are the only ones who can break the chain of violence," she says.

The Skopje Centre is too small to help all of the women that are victims of violence and need assistance. The Centre's administration says there are plans to open new shelters in other towns in Macedonia. For now, however, there simply is not enough money.

Beta/MDI, Belgrade/London, 17 September 2002

Does Markovska work at the centre? She makes some excellent points, but they could be fleshed out. Violence against women seems common everywhere. Is there any evidence to back up her claim that it is particularly common in the Balkans? Why can women not return to their parents? What does she mean by 'the cult of the male'? What are the laws regarding domestic violence?

◀ Her claim that wife-beaters are all neurotics and deranged seems like an oversimplification of the reasons that lead men to behave like this. There are many complex psychological reasons behind such behaviour, and a more thorough and thoughtful explanation would help shed light on the problem. Also, what kinds of mental health treatment do the women need? Do they have an understanding of "battered-wife syndrome" in Macedonia? What are the psychological and social pressures that make it hard for women to leave abusive husbands or boyfriends?

◀ Has the centre developed these plans for additional facilities, or are other groups making them? What is the cost of opening a centre like this? What efforts have been made to seek funding from non-governmental or international sources? If no other centres are going to open now, when might they open? How do women find out about the centre or contact it? It might be useful to include a phone number or some other way for women who might read the article to contact the centre.

This is a good example of how to explore a social problem through an in-depth examination of the experiences of one person. The journalist provides Mariana with a chance to reveal as many details as possible, which lends the story credibility. It is always possible, of course, that Mariana is exaggerating or even lying, and a journalist should definitely make sure to attribute the account to the person telling it. In this case, however, the accumulated power of her tale encourages us to believe what she says.

5. c) Mariana and the scars that won't heal: Poverty has turned a once-thriving Soviet state into a leading source of prostitutes

A report on the growing traffic in young women

Mariana will always carry a reminder of the terrible months she endured as a sex slave — the deep blue lines on her pale forearms, where an unknown man sliced her repeatedly with a butcher's knife.

"It is impossible to forget the pain. Even now that I am safe, it is very hard to sleep at night," says the 24-year-old woman, sitting in a run-down cafe in the suburbs of Chisinau, capital of Moldova. As she speaks, her hands tremble and her eyes dart about nervously as if she is on the lookout for danger. The psychological damage is as palpable as her scars. Mariana is one of hundreds, if not thousands, of young Moldovan women who are taken abroad each year, mainly to the former Yugoslavia, and put to work as prostitutes. She is one of a few who have managed to escape from the Balkans and return to their native land.

While poverty can drive women into prostitution the world over, Moldovans are especially vulnerable. Wedged between the Ukraine and Romania, theirs is the poorest country in Europe.

It was split in the early 1990s by a civil war that has left it divided between an official government in Chisinau in the west, and an unofficial administration in Tiraspol in the east. Corruption and organised crime are rampant. As well as

◀ This specific detail is an example of how close observation lends a story greater power. The reader can visualize these scars because we know they are blue and her forearms are pale, and we are told it was a butcher's knife rather than some other kind of knife.

◀ It would be useful here for the journalist to provide any available statistics from NGOs or others working on this issue. And is there a more precise estimate for how many have escaped and returned to their homes?

◀ The journalist should support this claim. By what measure is it the poorest? Is it poorer by all measures than Albania, for example, which has also been described as Europe's poorest country?

young women, almost anything is for sale — guns, drugs, contract killings and even body parts.

When Mariana was growing up in Soviet times in a farming village in southern Moldova, nobody predicted this nightmare. With its fertile land, Moldova was famed in the Soviet bloc for its food and its wine. KGB officers retired to Moldova because life was so good. They and their wives liked to stroll around the elegant parks of central Chisinau, the greenest city in Eastern Europe, according to its residents. The fragmentation of the Soviet Union has since destroyed Moldova's stability, plunging people into deep poverty. Factories have closed. Farms and vineyards have been abandoned. At least 600,000 of Moldova's 4 million population have gone abroad to work. In some districts as much as half the working-age population has moved away.

Mariana herself moved from her home village to Chisinau in the mid-1990s in search of work, which she eventually found in a textiles factory. She met a man, they married, and she became pregnant. When her son was born, she was put on extended maternity leave, with payments of less than \$30 a month. She barely had enough money to survive; her husband gave her nothing and then left her. Desperate for money at the end of 2000, she answered a job advertisement in *Makler*, a newspaper. The advertisement promised, she says, good pay for work abroad. She telephoned the number in the advertisement, spoke to a woman, and arranged to meet.

"I will never forget her. She had a scar across her face, like she had been cut with a knife. It should have been a warning to me. But I did not guess what was happening," says Mariana.

The scar-faced woman promised her \$300 a month for dancing in bars in Yugoslavia. "I said I could not dance. The woman said that did not matter, I could learn."

Mariana did not think twice. She left her child with her parents and a few days later joined three other young women in a car travelling from Chisinau to the Romanian border. There she expected to meet a Yugoslav, but instead was greeted by a surly Romanian. Mariana began to

feel worried as they sped hundreds of kilometres by car, stopping only to fill up with fuel.

Finally, they halted in Turnu Severin, a handsome, if dilapidated, town on the Danube. Across the other side of the river lay Serbia. “Here, I finally guessed what was happening to me. I told the man I wanted to go back to Moldova. He said “I have paid for you and I am not releasing you,” says Mariana. The journey’s physical hardships were compounded by fear. The women were taken across Serbia, Montenegro, and United Nations-administered Kosovo to the Macedonian border where they were made to walk eight hours along mountain trails to avoid the guards. About 10 days after leaving Chisinau, the women were installed in a flat in the Macedonian capital of Skopje and put to work by their pimps. Mariana was never entirely sure who these men were. Sometimes they were ordered around by ethnic Macedonians, sometimes by ethnic Albanians. But when Macedonian was spoken, she could understand it, as it is similar to Russian, which was taught throughout Moldova in Soviet times. Occasionally, men who seemed like police would call at the flat, sometimes to talk with the pimps, sometimes for sex. Once the police raided the flat when she was out buying food. She says she was rushed away by her pimps and hidden in a cellar for two weeks. Mariana says that at this time she refused sex work.

Instead, she cooked and cleaned for the other women. But in early January she was sold to an ethnic Albanian gang in Tetovo, the western Macedonian city dominated by ethnic Albanians.

She was housed with other women in a dingy flat above a bar on the outskirts of the city. Here, she finally stopped resisting and agreed to service clients herself. “It was terrible. I felt disgusted,” she says.

But there was no going back. She was scared of the pimps and scared of going to the police. “If you spoke badly about your patron, you could be hurt or even killed.”

To make life worse, the tensions which had long divided ethnic Macedonians and ethnic Albanians in Macedonia erupted into violence. In

the early spring, ethnic Albanian guerrillas began fighting in and around Tetovo.

Macedonian police and troops hit back with clumsy attempts to kill or capture the fighters. Mariana's most frightening moment was when a group of men burst into the flat. She was alone with one other Moldovan woman. The men were not in uniform, but she assumed they were ethnic Macedonian policemen from their manner and the official-sounding language they used.

"They wanted to know about our ethnic Albanian patrons. They were looking for the UCK (the ethnic Albanian liberation army). We said nothing. "Suddenly, one of the men brought out a butcher's knife. It was so sharp it would cut you if you just touched the blade. He cut me on both arms. The blood went everywhere."

The men left as quickly as they had arrived, says Mariana. To prove her story, she pulls up her sleeves and shows the blue scars that she says were made by the knife. There are four or five deep blue marks on both arms just above her wrists, which doctors say will never disappear. Mariana and her friend wrapped cloths around the wounds and rested to get over the shock. But they had no time to recover. With the fighting continuing between the guerrillas and the Macedonian security forces, they were kept awake at night by the sounds of shelling. "We were in a war," says Mariana. But still the girls had to keep working. Mariana says that, as well as ethnic Albanians and ethnic Macedonians, her clients included western European soldiers from the Nato-led forces stationed in Macedonia.

She then fell ill with a liver complaint, she says. When she recovered she refused to return to prostitution and worked instead in bars. Her salvation came from an unexpected quarter. An ethnic Albanian man who lived in the neighbourhood took pity on her and another Moldovan woman called Zana. One day in the late spring, he offered to hide them in an empty flat, away from their pimps. Mariana says they suspected he would want sex. But he demanded nothing. "He was very kind."

Mariana says she and Zana lived in the flat for several months living on food supplied by their

◀ The charge that Nato-affiliated soldiers were among the clients is an explosive one that others have made as well. It would be helpful for the journalist to provide some information here about the extent of this problem, how much is known about it, and so on.

Good Samaritan. In the confusion of the fighting, their pimps did not find their hiding place. In summer, the fighting in Macedonia ended in an uneasy truce and the women's benefactor become increasingly worried they would be captured.

He went to Skopje to ask for support from the Romanian embassy, which looks after Moldovan interests in Macedonia. The ambassador agreed to help. On September 3, the women boarded a bus from Tetovo to Skopje. Mariana says they were terrified they would be stopped by their pimps as they made the one-hour journey along the dual-carriageway between the two cities. But they reached the embassy, where the ambassador called a senior Macedonian police officer who organised an escort to the offices of Unicef, the United Nations children's organisation. A week later they were home in Moldova.

Mariana was overwhelmed to see her parents and her son again. She told her father and mother that she had been working abroad but not what she had been doing. She does not know whether they will guess the truth. She says she has learned a lesson. "If anybody asks me, I will say, 'Never, never do what I did'." The outline of Mariana's story is confirmed by La Strada, an international non-governmental organisation that rescues prostitutes and is now caring for Mariana in Chisinau.

Jana Costachi, director of the Centre for the Prevention of Trafficking in Women, another prostitution-linked NGO in Chisinau, says there is no way of knowing how many women work abroad as prostitutes — or how many are held against their will. "They are young and naïve. It is hard to establish how much they know before they leave." Vladimir Voronin, the Moldovan president, insists that the government is doing its best. "We are fighting against the mafia in all sorts of directions." The state recently introduced a new law outlawing the recruitment of sex workers and clamping down on suspect travel agencies that handle tickets and documents for the young women.

But Moldovan government officials say there is little that can be done, unless there is concerted action against prostitution in the countries where the women work, including UN-administered

◀ How are they caring for her? What services are they providing?

Kosovo. With so many demands on their resources, the governments of the former Yugoslavia are doing little to help, say the officials in Chisinau.

The trade goes on with new women recruited daily. A recent edition of Makler advertised jobs for women in Austria. A telephone call quickly established that what was required were young women “who are at least 160 centimetres tall, no older than 24 and must look good... We are talking about intimate relations here,” said the person who answered the telephone at the advertised number.

The police have had some notable successes. A few months ago, they raided the check-in desks at Chisinau airport and arrested a female Moldovan trafficker who was taking eight young women out of the country. The detective who led the raid said: “There was uproar. Four of the young women were upset because they wanted to leave the country and we had stopped them. The other four seemed relieved.”

But the police unit handling prostitution also deals with organised crime and lacks the money to concentrate on stopping human trafficking. Its head, a hard-bitten police chief called Constantin Clipa, says that while his force does its best, there is nothing it can do about the root cause, which is “poverty and the lack of jobs in Moldova.”

Financial Times, London, 12 January 2002

◀ The information offered in the final paragraphs is critical for grasping the overall situation. Readers might not see it, however, because many simply do not read articles all the way through. It would have been better to include some of it higher up in the story to provide greater context for understanding Mariana’s story.

6. People with disabilities

People with disabilities

People with disabilities—whether physical or mental—are frequently ignored by the media. When they are not ignored, they are usually written about as people to be either mocked or pitied. Reporters often discuss their problems and issues with doctors, government authorities and others without ever talking to disabled people themselves, so they have little idea what those affected are feeling and thinking about their own situation.

This may have something to do with the fact that it can be hard to find people with disabilities to interview. People with schizophrenia, retardation and other mental and emotional difficulties have long been hidden a way, either at home or in institutions, because their families have been ashamed of them or have wanted to protect them from social discrimination. The same is true for people missing limbs or suffering from cerebral palsy, multiple sclerosis and other physical handicaps, especially since society has made little effort to accommodate their needs in education, the workplace and the physical infrastructure, such as streets and public buildings.

Another difficulty is that people with some forms of disability are frequently also members of other social groups viewed negatively by the larger society. Although anyone can become infected with HIV and AIDS, drug addicts, prostitutes and homosexuals—who generally are not accepted as valuable members of society—are frequently viewed as having the greatest risk.

Here are some things to keep in mind when covering people with disabilities:

- ★ First, make sure to cover them. And when you cover them, make sure to actually talk to them. What others tell you about them—even if they speak of them sympathetically—should be just the starting point for your material. You should make contact with disabled people themselves and ask them if what other people have told you corresponds to how they themselves view their situation. If there is a contradiction in what you hear, you can go back to the doctors or others who perceive themselves as experts and question them again.

- ★ Do not cover disabled people only in the context of their disabilities. Disabled people have interests, careers, and families like everyone else. If you come across people who have attained success as artists, politicians, or professionals in spite of having a disability, that might make a good story. Spend some time with them to find out how they overcame any difficulties on the path to success. Ask them what advice they might have for others in similar situations.

- ★ Be careful with language. Every language has its own set of words—some insulting, some not-to describe people with disabilities. You may think that a particular word or expression is not hurtful, but you are not the best judge. If people with that disability

tells you that they prefer to be referred to in some other way, you should seriously consider their request.

★ One important aspect of journalistic coverage of people with disabilities is the issue of access. Write a story about whether or not society is making an effort to allow people with disabilities to participate in important social activities. If it is not, why not? Is it a question of money, lack of political will, deeply entrenched prejudice, or some other reason? What kind of education and professional opportunities are open-or closed-to disabled people?

★ Explore the issue of whether, and how, people with disabilities are forming groups or working with other non-governmental organisations to promote their rights. In many countries in Eastern Europe, for example, people with HIV and AIDS have created their own associations, both to find a way to support one another and to pressure the government and society to acknowledge their needs. In some areas, people with mental and physical disabilities, and their families, are demanding greater access to effective treatment. Find out what is going on in your region.

★ Make sure you know what you are talking about. If you are writing about people with HIV, for example, make sure you understand the difference between being infected with HIV and having AIDS. Make sure you understand how HIV is transmitted—and how it is not transmitted. Journalists have a wonderful opportunity to inform people, but they also have a great responsibility not to misinform them.

★ There is a difference, for a journalist, between feeling empathy for people with disabilities and pitying them. If you feel empathy, it means you respect them as individuals because you have spoken with them, spent time with them, observed their lives firsthand. Pity is often tinged with a condescending attitude that you, or others, know better than they do what they need. If you have formed opinions about the people with disabilities based on what people other than the disabled say about them, you are more likely to feel pity and are not yet prepared to write about their issues.

★ Because the disabled people are often hidden from society, it can be difficult to find people to talk to. The best approach to start is to contact groups and NGOs that represent them. Talk to the organisers to develop a general understanding of their concerns, and ask them to put you in touch with some of their members. You should also make sure to talk to others not involved with the group, who may have a different perspective or may offer more forthright or straightforward thoughts and opinions.

★ It is often true that stereotypes have an element of truth. There may be many beggars or homeless people among those without limbs—but that is most likely because society does not offer them any other choices. Drug addicts may have a higher rate of HIV—but that may be because they do not understand how to protect themselves from infection or do not have access to clean needles. The reasons for the association often have deep roots in society's problems, and blaming the people themselves is not the role of the journalist.

Case studies

This article is important because it addresses issues often overlooked in the media. It treats the disabled with respect and takes their concerns seriously. And it also interviews both a representative for the disabled and government officials. However, the article also includes journalistic lapses and raises some questions that it does not answer. For example, who exactly are the disabled addressed by the article? Is this just the physically disabled, or the mentally disabled as well? Are these primarily people with naturally occurring illnesses, or are many of them individuals who were injured during the wars of the 1990s?

6. a) **The Disabled live among us, not separate from us**

This headline is effective because it immediately makes clear that the focus of the article is on the need to offer the disabled the chance to be integrated into the community's daily life.

Belgrade — Disabled people in Serbia are virtually unable to move around and interact with other people, while the existing education system confines most of them to certain jobs which require little training. Serbia is no promised land for handicapped people. Namely, even Belgrade, the capital of the Federal Republic of Yugoslavia, does not provide conditions which would allow disabled people to enjoy the same quality of life other people do. There are hardly any government buildings with access or lifts for the disabled and the inadequate city transport system gives them little opportunity to move about.

People in the Serbian Association of Disabled Students told Beta that full social integration of the disabled would require the elimination of all existing prejudice and raising social awareness about such people in conjunction with the adoption of the necessary laws.

The association's coordinator, Vladimir Chuk, says that there are about 150,000 disabled people in Belgrade but the City Transport Company has only four vans with wheelchair access, there are only a few sets of traffic lights with sound-signalling in the city centre while the "paradox" of some public buildings is that they have ramps followed by stairs...

Are we to assume that Chuk himself is disabled? If he is, in what way? What problems has he faced? What kinds of discrimination has he experienced? This would help personalise the story and allow readers to have someone with whom to empathise. Otherwise, the disabled remain just a statistic.

“When wheelchair-bound students wish to attend lectures, they are immediately faced with a host of obstacles. For example, the lift is often out of order and if they manage to get to the University they have to negotiate steps because there are few ramps and some lecture halls have yet to introduce seating arrangements which allow for wheelchairs,” Chuk continues.

He adds that “the last textbook in Braille was printed more than 10 years ago, that Serbia has no training centre for guide dogs nor an institution which would provide personal helpers for the disabled.”

Chuk and the association’s other members believe that improving living conditions for disabled people does not necessarily require major expenditure.

“Traffic light sound signals cost less than 10 German Marks, evening out pavements costs nothing, fitting lifts with special buttons for the blind is cheap while personal helpers could work on a volunteer basis like in Belgium,” Chuk suggests.

He sees the adoption of new laws as the most urgent. The system would thereby recognise the special needs of disabled people and initiate the necessary changes in society.

Chuk notes that the existing Law on Secondary and Higher Education does not contain the term “disabled person” and that this would be essential if the right to education were to be genuinely equal.

One of the biggest problems in the system are the special schools that, members of the association say, do not exist in the developed world, while here they are the ones that define the fate of disabled people.

“The relevant authorities recommend special schools to disabled students and they become hairdressers, porters or telephone exchange operators,” Chuk says, adding that this adds to the “ghettoisation” of the disabled.

Stressing that the association, which supports people with all kinds of handicaps, is against special schools he observes that “home schooling for the disabled functions even worse and there is no proper programme for it.”

◀ Again, is this something he has had to deal with? Or, if not, it would be helpful if the journalist found someone else to describe, in more personal terms, how it feels to be constantly confronted with this sort of obstacle.

◀ Has the journalist checked that these statements are accurate? If not, why not? Advocates for causes frequently overstate their case. Even if the cause is a good one, a journalist should verify all claims, especially ones as sweeping as this.

◀ Again, these claims should be verified. It seems unlikely that fixing pavements would cost nothing at all. And surely installing traffic light sounds would cost more than the journalist indicates.

◀ Besides education, what kind of new laws would he like to see? Specifics would be helpful at this point. And even if the education law does not mention “disabled” people, what rights does it guarantee?

◀ It is good that the journalist attributed this claim directly to the association, but it is definitely inaccurate and should not just be repeated without qualification. Developed countries often have many special schools for the disabled, depending upon their disability. If the journalist means that the disabled in many developed countries are not automatically forced to attend separate schools rather than regular ones, that is a different point.

If disabled children had access to regular schools, they would develop their abilities to the full and take active part in community life, Chuk says.

Chuk stresses that the existing Law on Secondary and Higher Education makes no mention of “disabled people” and that other laws that contain the term are not observed.

“Architectural obstacles could be overcome if lectures attended by a handicapped person were held on the ground floor, but this depends on the school’s principal,” Chuk explains.

Expecting prejudice to be the toughest problem, Chuk says that the association hopes its campaigning will help disabled people integrate into society.

“Many problems are the result of ignorance and indifference, I do not think people cause them on purpose,” Chuk says, adding that taxi-drivers sometimes want to charge for wheelchairs as they do for luggage, that waiters sometimes refuse to help a disabled person because “it is not their job and university professors should, perhaps, be reminded that they should face a deaf student when they lecture to allow lip-reading”.

Furthermore, the association had trouble finding premises, because people were reluctant to rent once they knew who it was for. Most hotels refused to host the recent international conference of disabled people, while restaurants do not allow guide dogs on their premises, Chuk observes.

One of our members, Marko, managed to get the Church of the Virgin Mary in Zemun to fit a ramp which was later removed by the Office for the Protection of Cultural Monuments,” Chuk says, explaining that wheelchair-bound people had no access to Belgrade’s churches.

“Are stairways monuments?” Chuk wonders, adding that the ruins of Carthage are full of wheelchair ramps.

The relevant Serbian ministries agree that disabled people are in a difficult position and that their full social integration is virtually impossible. They agree that much fewer disabled people can be seen on the streets of Belgrade than in other

◀ Again, what laws address disabled issues? What, exactly, do they say?

When was this disabled conference held? How many people came? Who were they and where did they come from? What was the goal of the conference? What were the results? Since this seems like it might have been a significant event, some detail about it would be helpful. In addition how many hotels were called about hosting it? How many hotels were called? What exactly did they say?

◀ It would have been helpful if the journalist called one or two of the hotels that Chuk says refused to host the conference and asked them about it.

◀ The journalist should call both Marko and officials of the church in Zemun to find out what really happened rather than repeating it second-hand.

◀ Is it true that the ruins of Carthage has wheelchair ramps? The journalist should check if this claim is accurate

European cities and that together with technical obstacles, prejudice remains a great problem.

Following the October changes, the relevant ministries have launched campaigns for the integration of disabled people. However, realising the ideas put forward requires money, which the government does not have.

The Serbian Ministry For Education and Sports has launched a project called “make a ramp” which, officials say, “should be a small initial step which should show that improving life for disabled people is possible and should be done.”

The Ministry of Education also plans a joint drive with the Ministry of Labour and Welfare intended to improve the position of the disabled and to work out a long-term five-to-ten year strategy, says Ana Vljakovic, the coordinator of the “make a ramp” project in the Serbian Ministry of Education.

Ana Vljakovic explains that the first step will be to adapt the university buildings used by the largest number of students, like the library and computer centres, and this will be followed by work on the other university buildings, which should include building ramps and fitting lifts.

She notes that only the Department of Philosophy of Belgrade University is adapted for the needs of disabled students but that even that building does not have a special toilet.

Ana Vljakovic adds that “Belgrade only has two locations with toilets for the disabled, a café and the “Hyatt” hotel.”

In the building work, special consideration shall be given to the departments which contribute to better training and employment of disabled people, while the Ministry will urge schools and the University to organize teaching in a way that would allow disabled students to attend their courses on the ground floor.

Ana Vljakovic observes that building work on primary and secondary schools will require more money because they are in a worse state of disrepair and that several years of work and investment will be necessary.

The Serbian Ministry for Social Welfare recently organised a media campaign called “Life

◀ Which official said this? The journalist should quote a particular individual. If this quote is from an official statement from the ministry, the journalist should indicate that as well.

◀ In what way is it adapted? Why has this happened in the Department of Philosophy and not other departments?

◀ This may be true, but it may not be. It would be better to state that Vljakovic “believes” that there are only two such locations, which signals to the reader that there is a possibility she is mistaken.

◀ Which departments are those that contribute to better training and employment of disabled people?

without Barriers”.

The campaign’s message to people was that the disabled live with them, not separate from them, Deputy Minister Danica Todorovic explains.

She stresses the need to destroy the barriers we carry “in our heads” as well as “subconscious prejudice” which give rise to indifference towards the disabled.

Danica Todorovic says that her ministry has given priority to measures aimed at helping the disabled lead independent lives and helping their families within the frameworks of social welfare reforms.

An independent life for the disabled means adequate accessible funds, improvement of their position by non-institutional means, destroying physical obstacles that prevent them from moving around, introducing personal helpers for disabled people, creating conditions for normal education and developing all forms of welfare, Danica Todorovic observes.

She complains that the ministry lacks the necessary funds and staff but adds that this is not a reason to halt the reforms and that alternative solutions must be found.

Both the disabled and state officials agree that the position of disabled people is extremely bad. The disabled are striving to improve their quality of life through their associations and campaigns while state officials say that they are ready to launch and take part in such processes. There is plenty of goodwill but not enough money. The required changes are very expensive, like in all the other states in transition.

Once broader state issues are tackled, the time for smaller ones will hopefully come. In the meantime, disabled people will go on fighting social prejudice and making people aware of the media, street and educational campaigns. The process will also have to include making the majority of disabled people aware that they enjoy the same right to take part in all social activity.

Beta/MDI, Belgrade/London, 18 January 2002

◀ What did the campaign consist of? Billboards? TV commercials?

◀ What exactly are these prejudices? The article never specifies. Is it that disabled people should not work? Should not be seen in public? It would be helpful if the article included somebody who could articulate the perspective of those who have prejudices.

◀ This contradicts the previous assertion by Chuk that some of the changes require very little money. Which statement is accurate?

◀ Are there disabled people who do not understand that they have those rights? Maybe the journalist should interview some of them. This final paragraph is well-meaning but is really an editorial statement rather than based on objectively reported information.

This story concerns an incident of extremely insensitive language used in a headline for a story about a fire in a psychiatric facility. The headline—"Roasted Nuts"—not only played on stereotypes about those suffering from mental illness but was also technically inaccurate, since no one was injured in the blaze.

6. b) Roasted nuts

Publisher apologises for headline

The publisher of a city tabloid apologised in print Tuesday for a headline on the paper's story about a recent fire at a psychiatric facility.

The Trentonian's story on a July 9 fire that damaged an administration building at Trenton Psychiatric Hospital appeared under the headline "Roasted Nuts." There were no patients in the building and no one was injured.

In a signed editorial, publisher David B. Bonfield called it a "crude, thoughtless headline that cruelly made light of mental illness. In the bargain, it was inaccurate."

Bonfield noted that readers of the 47,526-circulation daily had flooded the publication with complaint calls and letters to the editor.

"This newspaper has always prided itself in standing up for the powerless against the powerful — a style that won it a Pulitzer Prize in some fisticuffs over New Jersey political corruption. It should have come as no surprise to us, then, when our readers stood up for the powerless — against us — and let us have it. And we had it coming. Every blow," Bonfield wrote.

He said the newspaper would "try to make amends not just by being more sensitive to the plight of the mentally ill but by becoming an aggressive advocate for their interests."

The headline's writer, Tony Persichilli, already had apologised in the paper the day after the headline was published. The columnist and copy editor wrote that the headline was inaccurate and insensitive and he took full responsibility.

In apologising for the incident, the publisher recognised how insulting the language used was and quickly responded to complaints from both readers and organisations representing the mental disabled. His action is evidence that media organisations do at times respond to pressure from the public and that it is important to try to hold them accountable for their lapses in judgement.

◀ Drawing attention to an incident of this type can, in the end, prove beneficial to all parties. It can force the media organisation to become more responsible in reporting on diversity-related issues, which in turn helps the public to receive less biased information about important social issues.

But the National Alliance for the Mentally Ill said last week Persichilli's apology was inadequate, The Philadelphia Inquirer reported. The group said the headline was "one of the worst examples of institutional prejudice and discrimination in recent memory" and called for "affirmative, remedial actions."

◀ Non-governmental organisations can and should play a key role in documenting insensitive coverage, pressuring news operations and encouraging the public to pay attention to such issues. Reporters and editors need to recognise that such groups can be a source of invaluable input and advice concerning coverage of minority communities of all kinds.

The Associated Press, Trenton, N.J., 23 July 2002

7. Socially disadvantaged groups

Socially disadvantaged groups

In Communist societies, socially disadvantaged groups such as drug addicts, prisoners, the homeless, and the unemployed either did not officially exist or were viewed as enemies of the state. As a result, their lives, concerns and problems were not considered of interest and remained unexplored by the media—as if coverage would somehow have endowed them with legitimacy and generated unwarranted sympathy for their plight.

Since then, however, it has become clear that ignoring the presence of such groups does a disservice to society. Every society that previously believed itself immune to the social ills associated with capitalism has discovered that wilful ignorance does little to make complex problems disappear. In fact, the presence of vast and growing numbers of disadvantaged citizens has suggested just the opposite: that to pretend something does not exist only makes matters worse in the end.

Here are some ways to improve coverage of socially disadvantaged groups:

- ★ Identify which disadvantaged groups are common in your city or region. Do you have a particular problem with unemployment because of factory closings nearby? Is there an especially large number of homeless people because of conflict-related destruction of property or some other reason? How about veterans of regional wars? Drug addicts? Then examine how—or even whether—your media outlet has covered these groups, evaluate the material, and determine what gaps remain.

- ★ Make sure to interview unemployed people, drug addicts, war participants and others about whom you are writing. Members of disadvantaged groups tend to appear in the media, if they do at all, in connection with crime and, more often than not, are not even interviewed. Generally, law enforcement officials and other “experts” are allowed to present their perspective without challenge. And because journalists often share these stereotypes, they may simply transmit them to the readers without qualification.

- ★ Make contact with non-governmental organisations whose mission is to help the unemployed, drug addicts, the homeless and other members of socially disadvantaged groups. Develop these people as reliable sources. Encourage them to call you with story ideas. Ask them what are the most important issues they are working on. Request that they arrange for you to spend time with members of the groups for whom they are advocating.

- ★ When you interview the unemployed, drug addicts and others, do not limit your questions to those topics. Try to gain a full understanding of their lives, to find something they feel passionately about. Ask them about interests, hobbies, family members,

pets—anything that might allow you to empathise with their situation and not view them solely through the prism of their shortcomings or disadvantages. Make an effort to convey who they are as real people, with rich histories and complex inner lives, rather than simply as a representative of a socially deprived group.

★ Place social troubles in context. If drug addiction has become a major problem recently, explore the factors that have led to that. Economic collapse? Greater availability of narcotics? If unemployment is on the rise, try to figure out why. Are local factories closing? Has there been a drop in exports? If you are writing about ex-convicts who commit crimes again, explore how easy or difficult it is for former prisoners to find jobs. It always helps readers understand other people's situation if they are presented with a complete picture of events.

★ Profile a member of one of these groups who has done something difficult or extraordinary. Has someone who has not been able to find employment in one field managed to switch gears completely and become a success in another area? Has someone kicked drug addiction and gone on to create an organisation to help others in the same situation? Has a former prisoner fully reformed and achieved recognition as an artist?

★ While it is critical to spend time with the people you are writing about, that does not mean you need to accept everything they say at face value. You will undoubtedly hear lots of depressing stories from them, but unless you confirm the truth of each one you should make it clear in your story that you are attributing the information to your sources. For example, if a drug addict tells you he only shoots up once a week, you should report that he says he shoots up only once a week, since you cannot know for sure whether or not that is true. If an unemployed person says she has been rejected for 10 jobs, you should report that she says she has been rejected for 10 jobs, not that she actually has been.

Case studies

This article addresses an important issue but is very short on specifics. It is clear that veterans are having difficulties, but we learn nothing about what the difficulties are.

7. a) **War veterans in an alarming state: a suicide a day**

◀ This makes a good headline because it is such a striking statistic.

The latest was committed by Faik Delalic, President of Tuzla's Demobilised Veterans' Organisation.

One or two demobilised fighters in the Federation of Bosnia and Herzegovina commit suicide every day.

The data is based on the exchange of information among Cantonal War Veterans Organisations, says Nijaz Hodzic, President of the Demobilised Veterans' Organisation of Tuzla.

◀ This is confusing because the article says that the man who committed suicide was the president of the Tuzla group. Did this man take over after Delalic's death?

The latest was committed by Faik Delalic, whose name Hodzic resonates with reverence—the members of the Tuzla Organisation called him "Dad."

◀ When exactly did he commit suicide?

Upon returning from the trial of one of his fighters accused of forcibly evicting residents from their homes, he wrote a farewell message—"Forgive me, I can take no more"—and then took his own life.

◀ How did he take his own life? Is there any more information about the cause? Had he been depressed? What was his personal situation? Did he have any survivors?

Demobilised veterans ask nothing more of the authorities and people of Bosnia and Herzegovina than the place in society they deserve, is the message of the special press conference held by the Organisation of Demobilised Veterans of the 1992-95 Defence and Liberation War.

◀ When was this press conference held? Yesterday? Last week? And where was it held? Who was present?

Its president, Mehmed Focic, says that the Party of Democratic Action lost power because it failed to pass laws that would provide veterans with their basic needs. "As a powerful election machine, we contributed to the change in government," Focic said. "The incumbent authorities

What are their needs? What are their demands? What kind of conditions are they finding themselves in? It would be useful to include some information about how they are living right now and an interview or two with other veterans. In addition, it would be a good idea to talk to political analyst or other election observers about whether unhappiness among veterans really contributed to the party's defeat, as Focic claims.

What is the minister's response to these charges?

have not done much for the veteran population," Focic added.

Veterans are particularly incensed by the Law on War Invalids and Dependants of Casualties because it, according to Focic, negates the achievements of the war while making no mention of demobilised veterans.

The veterans organisation blames the author of the law, the Minister for Veteran Affairs in the government of the Federation of Bosnia and Herzegovina, Suada Hadzovic, and calls for the "sacking of the arrogant and incompetent minister for veterans affairs."

It warns the Alliance for Change just like it warned the Party of Democratic Action that they should have the veterans' interests in mind and not only their own or they will not remain in power for long. They also took the opportunity to wish all citizens, especially the country's defenders, a happy Statehood Day.

◀ What exactly does the law say? How does it negate the achievements of the war? What law would the veterans propose instead? And how many veterans are disabled because of war injuries?

◀ What do other people have to say about the veterans' demands? Are there any groups that oppose them or feel their demands are unreasonable?

Oslobodjenje, Sarajevo,
25 November 2001

This article offers a sympathetic portrait of recovering drug addicts by portraying them as hard-working and willing to take dramatic steps to overcome their problems. The journalist has made a genuine effort to interview several of them and present their perspective in an effort to promote understanding. However, the piece leaves many questions unanswered and still presents a somewhat naïve portrait of how drug addiction develops and how it should be addressed. It would have helped to include more information about what, exactly, the treatment programme involves. Are there psychologists, doctors, and administrators who oversee the refuge? Or are the drug addicts themselves the only inhabitants? The story never makes that clear.

7. b) **To some People, the drug addicts' commune is an island of salvation**

People come here voluntarily. Moreover, to stay here, they have to sign an agreement, which forbids all psychotropic material, coffee, Coca-cola, alcoholic drinks, cigarettes and money. Nor can they watch TV, listen to the radio or read newspapers. Actually, access to TV is permitted, but only once a month.

The youngest member of the commune is 16, the oldest one is 30. His name is Bisser and he is the chief of the inhabitants. He has spent about two years here, almost from the very start of the refuge. The newest member arrived a day ago, and the one who is the most dependent is a tall guy with a broom. Just 10 days ago, when his parents brought him here, he could hardly walk. While he remained in bed, he twice swallowed his tongue and was being taken care of as if he were a baby. No one asked him how he felt, since they all knew that pretty well. The encouraging fact is that he now can walk, even work.

What unites the inhabitants of the commune is that they are all addicted to drugs. They all started casually, with the idea to simply try what it was all about. They all thought they could quit at any time, to find out after two months that it was too late and they were already hooked.

Some years ago, the parents of these kids were well off. Now they are all poor. All their belongings, savings, and furniture have gone.

◀ This is a bit confusing. Is there a TV there, or not? Who controls the access to the TV?

How many residents are there? Has the journalist talked to all of them? If not, then it is difficult to say that they all started taking drugs casually, that they all thought they could quit at any time that they all realised they were hooked after two months. The word "all" should be used, in general, when the journalist knows that something genuinely applies to all the people being discussed. In other circumstances, the word "many" or "most" is preferable.

Moreover, they are all heavily in debt. They have all spent time visiting the most renowned doctors, but in vain. The is the final hope to stave off death.

About two years ago, Vladimir Kachakliev organised the first drug-addicts' commune at Belmeken, a high mountain peak in the Rila Mountain, in order to save his son. He used only his own money. He thinks his efforts have not been in vain, and he is helping other people's kids as well. Now there are two other similar refuges in the country. What distinguishes them is the quality of the bread—it is soft and tasty, baked by the refuges' residents themselves.

It is 6.30 a.m. and the kids from the commune wake up. Those responsible for cooking wake up an hour earlier to prepare breakfast. The days start with some physical exercises, a quick shower, and then work. Lunch is served at 1.15 p.m. Then work again, till 7 p.m. Dinnertime is at 8.30 and at 11.00 sharp they all go to bed. Six days a week, four weeks a month. Half of Sunday is free time for football, body-building and books.

And all the kids in the commune know that to succeed they have to live here a year or two, or even longer. Some who thought they were cured and left earlier are now again among the 30,000 addicts who are heavily dependent on drugs. They are not allowed to come back to the refuge, which is also part of the agreement.

People in the commune know that the best medicine is work, and they voluntarily keep on working for more than 10 hours a day.

V.H. is 24 years old and comes from Sofia. He tried drugs some three years ago. He has been at the commune for about eight months and feels perfectly all right now. He is not yet sure, however, if he is strong enough not to try drugs again. Therefore, he has been staying on here, looking after about 40 New Zealand rabbits. He spends most of his time with the rabbits, feeding and cleaning them, even helping them to give birth. These skills he has acquired both from experience and books, which he devoutly orders to learn more and more about breeding rabbits.

Again, is it really true that all the families were well off, and now all are poor, heavily in debt and have no belongings or furniture left? Have all the families visited the most renowned doctors? It seems unlikely that the journalist knows the circumstances of the family of every resident.

This would be a good place to offer some details about the establishment of the refuge. How did Kachakliev develop his plans? Did he have any experience in this field? Did he consult any doctors, psychologists, or specialists? How much did it cost him? What is the annual budget? How far is it from other villages or towns? What does the commune look like? How many buildings are there, and were they built for this purpose or were they being used for something else before? How many residents are there in this and the other refuges? How do they measure success? How many people have left the refuge, and how many of those who have left have stayed off drugs? These are all vital questions, but the journalist leaves out all of these facts.

This detailed schedule is a very effective way of showing us what daily life in the commune is like. It might have been useful here to include some examples of the kind of work people are doing there.

Is 30,000 the number of addicts in the entire country? According to whom? Is that an official or unofficial figure? Why do they need to live there for a year or two, or even more? What is the rationale for not allowing those who have left and then started taking drugs again to come back to the refuge?

Is work the only treatment? Do they have support group meetings? Are they so far away from other towns that they have no possibility of smuggling drugs in?

It is important that the journalist included V.H. and other actual people. But many questions remain unanswered. What is this person's background? Did he have an education? How and why did he start taking drugs? How did he decide that he needed help? Does he have a background in farming or raising animals? What does he look like? Does he have to pay to live here, or is it subsidised?

Dobromir is also from Sofia. He has already been at the commune for about 14 months. He works as a cook and a baker. “Even if I do not continue with this profession when I leave, the skills I have acquired here will be useful to me,” he says philosophically.

Zlatko, who is 18, first tried drugs when he was 11. He switched to heroin at 13. Now he spends his time in the bodybuilding room. His nickname is “Rocky-man”. When he arrived at the refuge, he looked like a skeleton. In seven months, however, he has put on 18 kilos.

People at the commune themselves produce many of the things they need. Rabbits, hens, several pigs, and a cow that very recently gave birth, live on the refuge’s farm. There is also a goat brought by the parents of one of the kids. This winter a pig was stolen by some thieves. “We looked after it for months on end, and they simply shot it,” complain the kids.

But there are nice people, too, the kids say. Some have come and given them furniture and household items. The kids have done a lot to make life in the commune more comfortable. They are so proud of their bathroom, which they decorated themselves. There is a fixed schedule for use of the brand new washing machine, which was a recent present from Vladimir Kachakliev, the man who founded the refuge.

Freedom of speech is a key principle at the refuge. The kids insist on it and talk freely about their former experiences, not sparing any details of the nightmare they have passed through before coming here. This way, it will be easier to part with their former life, they think.

A resident’s parents are not allowed to come here during his first six months. After that, they can come once every three months. And they do it eagerly again and again, hoping that the next time they will be able to take their kids away, this time for good.

Standart Daily, Sofia, 30 August 2002

◀ Again, it would be useful to provide more information about Dobromir and Zlatko’s backgrounds? Who are they? How did they start taking drugs? How did they find out about the refuge? Is there a waiting list to get in, or can anyone who wants to come here and stay?

◀ This statement about the pig appears to contradict itself. Was the pig stolen or shot? If it was stolen, how do the residents of the commune know it was also shot?

◀ Again, are there organised groups to talk about these problems, led by someone with experience in treating drug addicts? Or is the journalist just referring to informal discussions among the residents?

◀ What is the rationale for allowing parents not to visit for six months? Or for allowing visits every three months after that? Who established that rule?

8. Elderly people and pensioners

Elderly people and pensioners

Many older people in post-Communist societies have found themselves in desperate situations. Whereas their pensions used to be sufficient to ensure them at least a basic level of survival, social and economic changes have forced many of them to seek ways of earning enough extra money just to feed themselves. Inflation has so outstripped their ability to purchase goods and services that they often have to resort to begging on the streets.

Although their plight is well-known, journalists rarely focus on them. When seniors do appear in media reports, it is almost always in the person of a babushka, stooped over and dressed in a torn shawl, complaining about how things are not the way they used to be. It is rare that elderly people are portrayed as accomplished, attractive, fighting for their rights, or anything but passive victims of circumstances.

Here are a few tips on creating a more diverse image of the elderly:

- ★ Find out if there are any organisations involved with helping seniors in your city or region. Talk to them about the issues confronting the elderly. Visit a community centre or a park frequented by the elderly. Ask them about what kinds of issues they face. You may think you know all about what the elderly are facing. But if you spend some time examining the issue, you may be surprised at what you learn.

- ★ Financial concerns are important, of course, but they are not the only aspect to explore. For example, you might choose to focus on what health issues the elderly face. What illnesses are widespread among them, and where can they receive health care? How are they treated at clinics and hospitals? Do economic problems contribute to poor diet and nutrition?

- ★ Relationships between the elderly and their children and grandchildren have changed dramatically in the past decade. Many young people have moved away in search of a better life, leaving their parents behind. In some cases, families have been separated by war or are struggling with disability or death suffered in the upheavals of recent years. Write a story exploring these issues. How have the economic and social changes affected family dynamics?

- ★ Spend a day with one or more elderly people begging on the street and write about it. How do other people react? How do the seniors themselves feel about what they are doing? How much do they collect in a day? How do they intend to spend it? How do they decide which corner or location to select?

- ★ Do the same with an elderly man or woman selling something—chocolate, perfume, whatever—on the street. Explore the economics of the situation. Where do they get

the goods? How much do they have to pay? How much do they earn? What problems do they encounter with the authorities?

★ Profile elderly people doing extraordinary things. Is there a well-known actor in your area who continues to work past retirement age? How about any lawyers, doctors, or other professionals? Find seniors, well-known or not, who have interesting hobbies or unusual skills, or who are engaged in sports or some other form of physical activity. Does pursuing a special interest help them feel young and stay engaged in life?

★ Write an article exploring the issue of “ageism.” The concept, which refers to prejudice or discrimination against older people, has become increasingly recognised in the West as a major problem confronting seniors in many aspects of their lives. Is there a comparable understanding in your region? Do older people face discrimination in, for example, the workplace, or in other areas of their lives?

Case study

This brief article is an example of the media conveying prejudice against the elderly without offering them a chance to respond. The proposal is a blatant effort to generate antagonism toward people over 60 by suggesting that they are incapable of making an appropriate choice about Montenegro's future. This kind of information should not be transmitted without at least an effort being made to contact representatives of pensioners to allow them to explain why they should be granted a full vote like everyone else.

8. a) **Half a vote for the 60+**

Podgorica — Liberal Alliance delegates Vesna Perovic and Labud Sljukic have proposed that people over 60 should only have “half a vote” at a referendum on Montenegro's future. The Podgorica media report today that the LA delegates said that 20 and 60-year-olds cannot carry the same weight in decisions on Montenegro's future.

Danas/Beta, Belgrade, 20 December 2000

What is the rationale for granting 20-year-olds a greater say? Is it just because they have a longer life ahead of them? Should 20-year-olds also have a greater say than 40-year-olds? How about 50-year-olds? Do the proponents of this plan believe that 80-year-olds should have no vote at all?

9. Refugees and internally displaced persons

Refugees and internally displaced persons

The wars in South East Europe over the past decade have created a wave of refugees. Some have crossed borders and live in terrible conditions in other countries; others are internally displaced persons who simply no longer have homes—and independent lives—of their own. Many have managed to keep their families together, but others have lost parents, spouses, and children, either through attacks on civilians, disease, or, in the least traumatic manner, immigration.

Inevitably, the existence of so many internally displaced persons and refugees has led to enormous social, economic and political pressures in the regions where they have ended up. In many places, long-time residents—themselves struggling to adjust to life under new and often harsh conditions—have not welcomed their presence. Politicians often seek to bolster their popularity by promoting resentment against them among the local population.

Journalists can play an important role in helping to ease rather than exacerbate tensions. Here are some ways to do that:

- ★ Make an assessment of how your media outlet has addressed the issue of refugees in order to identify gaps in coverage. Do they only appear in stories about crime, for example? Or have you included material about ways in which they are trying to help themselves, ways in which they are seeking to improve their lives? Have you written stories in which politicians or local residents complain about the problems associated with refugees without allowing them an opportunity to respond?

- ★ Much of the coverage of refugees inevitably focuses on crime. It may be true that crime is a problem, but it is important to address the context when you write about it. What is the situation with unemployment among the refugees? What traumas have they suffered? How many children do they have to feed? This does not mean you have to find excuses for criminal activity, but you should attempt to describe some of the desperation with which they are forced to live.

- ★ Spend some time in a refugee camp or squatters' area in your region and talk to as many people as you can. Write an article describing what you see. What are the conditions like? What kind of homes are people living in? What about running water? Are their children able to attend school of any kind? What kind of food is available?

- ★ Make contact with non-governmental organisations, whether local or international, that work with or represent the interests of refugees. Find out what they are doing to help out. Ask them what are the major issues currently facing refugees in your area. Ask them to arrange for you to spend a day with a family so you really understand what their life is like.

★ Find one or more refugees who have managed to work their way out of their difficulties. How did they manage to find employment? A home? Food? Educational possibilities for their children? Ask them how they overcame their circumstances and if they have any advice for other families.

★ Write a profile of a refugee who is devoting himself to improving the life of others in the same situation. Has someone organised a school on-site? If so, spend a day in the classroom and describe it. Is there someone who is helping refugees find jobs? Is anyone helping them locate relatives they may have lost track of in the chaos of war and upheaval?

★ Write a story about the psychological and other health issues confronting refugees as they seek to reintegrate into society. Ask doctors how many of them are suffering from post-traumatic stress and other emotional difficulties. Are there diseases that are particularly widespread among refugees, and what steps are officials taking—or not—to address the problem?

Case studies

This story is an example of the xenophobic attitude of elements of the British press toward refugees and asylum seekers. The piece essentially paints the asylum seekers, who after all are desperately trying to find a new home for themselves and their families because of terrible conditions at home, as villains who simply do not appreciate everything that Britain is supposedly doing for them. But except for a representative of an NGO, the reader is offered no information from the detainees' point of view.

9. a) **Asylum policy goes up in smoke — So this is how they thanks us: Rioting detainees start £35m blaze**

The headline immediately portrays the detainees as “ungrateful people” who basically deserve their fate. Including the estimated damage in the subhead is an effective way to further prejudice reader opinion against them.

The luxury facilities could not have been better at the showpiece £100m detention centre—but asylum seekers still burned it to the ground.

A mob—attempting a mass breakout—destroyed two plush wings which were only opened last month.

The £35 million bill for the damage would pay for a new hospital, or 1,400 junior doctors, 1,500 police or 2,400 nurses. And the trouble cast doubt on Britain’s policy of handling asylum detainees.

Riot cops, guards and fire-fighters battled from 8pm on Thursday until dawn yesterday to control the fire and rampage at Yarl’s Wood centre in Clapham, Beds.

Today police were still unsure how many refugees were on the run. Up to 15 were thought to be missing after 12 were arrested. They stole keys to open gates. Three detainees, two cops and a Group Four officer were hurt in the riot.

The centre houses 384 asylum seekers-most waiting for deportation.

Facilities include eight prayer rooms, 10 classes with computers, shops and libraries with books in 40 languages. There are gyms, pool tables and sports areas. Detainees first started a fire in an

◀ The first two sentences continue the theme of ingratitude in the face of the generosity of the British, who have provided “luxury” accommodations in a “showpiece” facility with “plush” wings.

◀ The journalist should explain who estimated the cost of the damage, and how. Calculating what else could have been done with the money is certainly an effective journalistic strategy but in this case it simply furthers the article’s goal of inflaming public opinion against the asylum-seekers by, in effect, blaming them for a shortage of doctors and nurses.

Since they are waiting for deportation, it is unclear what reason they would have to be grateful toward Britain.

◀ Some more context—who they are, where they come from, what they are fleeing—would be useful. The journalist does not appear to have made any effort to talk to any of the detainees about their situation or the conditions under which they were being held.

administrative block and threw missiles at security staff. Police arrived within minutes and eventually 200 cops were called in, along with 20 fire crews. A guard was hurt jumping from the first floor to escape flames. CCTV cameras were smashed and records destroyed. Four women nurses were reportedly locked in a room by detainees while the building burned. Fires were then started in the Charlie and Delta wings, which were gutted. Rioters were herded outside by cops. The other two wings, Alpha and Bravo—which are separated by a road—were evacuated. Villagers nearby were warned to lock up houses and sheds where people could hide out.

Fire chief Clive Walsh revealed the Home Office had ignored fire brigade requests for a sprinkler system to be installed. The riot was thought to have started after a woman of 55 was allegedly handcuffed as she waited to go to hospital.

Mike Gilmour, of the Campaign to Stop Arbitrary Detentions, said: “Detainees have suggested this was the final straw to spark it off.”

Group Four denied the woman was handcuffed. Detainees were yesterday sent to other centres.

◀ Is this a typical example of how people were treated at the detention centre? It would be useful to learn more details.

The Sun, London, 16 February 2002

This article is a thoughtful portrait of how the members of one family are coping with the dislocation caused by leaving behind their home and their country. In its presentation of details of their lives and a discussion of their hopes and fears—combined with a fair amount of the broader political and social context—the piece offers a sympathetic account of the family’s complicated dilemma. In this way, it suggests a real alternative to the kind of blame-the-refugee material that frequently appears in Western as well as Eastern media. And it also describes the refugee plight without at the same time demonising the Serbs, which is also a common and not particularly useful approach taken when addressing the issue.

9. b) **Albanian refugee family struggles in limbo: Evacuees are caught between making a new life and dealing with the old as they wait for word on when they can return to their war-torn home**

As tens of thousands of his fellow ethnic Albanians rushed back into Kosovo last week, Besnik Vlashi peered into a cramped San Fernando Valley duplex, its dark interior as much a mystery as his own future.

Besnik and the rest of his family, airlifted to the United States in the past few weeks with about 7,600 other Kosovo refugees, are spending their days making a new life here: finding a home, learning English, getting jobs.

But although the peace agreement brokered earlier this month opened the doors for the return of refugees in and around Kosovo, it also marked the start of a new and upsetting period of uncertainty for the Vlashis and their fellow evacuees.

The refugees’ initial relief at arriving safely in America has been replaced by more ragged emotions, from frustration at the unrelenting newness of their lives to grief slowly emerging from long-buried memories. “When we first came, we were trying to find out where we were and what was going on,” said Besnik, 17. “Now, the memories are building up.”

The uncertainty will not be resolved any time soon. As the United Nations and aid agencies scramble to cope with refugees returning to

Quotes like this one personalise the dilemma of the refugees by allowing them to give voice to their feelings, frustrations and concerns. Many stories discuss them only in terms of crimes or other social problems and interview only authorities or angry citizens rather than refugees themselves.

Kosovo, they have yet to come up with any definitive plan to deal with the 88,000 refugees airlifted to 29 countries.

Further complicating the picture are the estimated thousands of refugees who still want to come to the United States, the peace accord unable to wipe out their memories of a homeland ravaged by slaughter and rape.

Several nations, including England and Germany, announced last week they will no longer accept Kosovo refugees, now that the bombing campaign is over.

As a result, some immigration experts predict that the U.S. may soon become the sole country accepting Kosovo refugees. At least 5,000 more are awaiting evacuation to the U.S., according to government figures.

"There is almost a daily debate going on discussing what to do," said Panos Moutziz, a Washington, D.C.-based spokesman for the Office of the United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees.

Refugee groups are pushing to make sure the door to the U.S. remains open, especially for refugees with medical problems too complex for the devastated health care system in Kosovo to handle, and for those severely traumatized by rape or loss of family members.

"We want to make sure that refugees in need of third-country resettlement have that opportunity," said Leonard Glickman, executive vice president of the Hebrew Immigrant Aid Society, which, with the Jewish Federation of Los Angeles, helped bring the Vlasis to the U.S.

One thing is sure: Refugees like the Vlasis who chose to flee to the U.S. rather than remain in miserably crowded camps and private homes in Macedonia and Albania are at the bottom of the list for resettlement assistance.

Those in most urgent need of attention are the tens of thousands of internally displaced refugees who hid in the mountains and forests within Kosovo, lacking food or shelter.

Next are the hundreds of thousands who have spent months in crowded and unsanitary refugee camps, many of them within sight of Kosovo, a

province of Serbia, the dominant republic of Yugoslavia.

Expatriated refugees like the Vlashis can't expect governmental help to return home until next spring at the earliest, immigration and U.N. officials predict.

Technically, the refugees can leave of their own accord. But if they wait until the U.S. government declares Kosovo safe—a determination that could take months—they are guaranteed a free plane trip home.

If the refugees decide to stay in the U.S., they will be charged for the airfare to travel to this country, about \$3,000 for a family of four. Despite the price tag, many experts predict that most of the refugees here will remain.

In part, that's because of better services offered in the U.S. But it is also because of a modern tradition in Kosovo Albanian culture to work abroad and send money home. Some estimate that as many as one in four ethnic Albanians work abroad.

"Common sense says that, once they get here and get jobs and kids in school, more and more will remain," said Mark Franken, executive director for migration and refugee services for the U.S. Catholic Conference.

The Vlashis said they want to return, though they are prepared for a long wait. But frustrations abound. Chief among them is their own independence. After weeks of living with their host family, they feel they have become a burden—despite assurances to the contrary by their hosts, Bobbie and Steven Black of Calabasas.

They have had trouble finding an apartment for their family of six for around \$1,000 a month. The high cost of housing and small units in the U.S. caught them off guard. They are not used to the idea of paying so much for so little, compared with what they can get for the same money in Kosovo.

"We feel like we're being a burden," said Fatime Vlasi, 47, the mother of the family, which also includes daughters Lumnie, 22, Ganimete, 21, and Fitore, 7. "We'd like to have a place of our own."

◀ This article would have benefited from more information about their hosts. Why have they decided to host the family? What are their feelings about the situation? It would be good to offer readers some insight into ordinary people who view refugees as a group worthy of help and sympathy rather than one that just causes major social problems.

Another source of worry is the father of the family, Hazir Vlashi, 47. He was separated from the family during the evacuation, though he is expected to arrive from Macedonia any day.

And finally, there are memories of what they have seen and experienced.

One daughter walked through snowy mountains for 15 hours to reach safety. Hazir Vlashi was severely beaten by Serbs, family members said. They have lost contact with numerous friends.

"We're continually sad because of the situation," Besnik said.

Refugee experts are expecting to see more psychological problems as time passes.

Unlike most refugees, who spent months and even years adjusting to their situations before coming to the United States, the Kosovo refugees were ripped from their homes and deposited abroad in a matter of weeks.

Processing the trauma will take time, experts say.

"Various psychological problems are expected to happen," Glickman said. "It absolutely will present challenges."

Los Angeles Times, Woodland Hills, 21 June 1999

◀ Presenting details about their experiences is useful in creating sympathy for refugees rather than antipathy and anger toward them. Many stories appear to be designed to stir up resentment against refugees by ignoring the reasons they have fled and portraying them simply as greedy new arrivals who receive far more than they deserve.

10. Sexual Orientation

Sexual Orientation

Sexual minorities in South East Europe countries have become more visible in recent years. They have organised associations, conferences and gay pride parades, forcing journalists to address the complex issues raised by people with non-traditional sexual orientations—gays, lesbians and bisexuals. But many reporters and media organisations still routinely treat such individuals as freaks and social outcasts not deserving of compassion, understanding and basic human rights.

Here are some tips when covering sexual minorities:

- ★ Pay careful attention to the question of language. Many reports use derogatory words like “pederast” and “pervert” to describe sexual minorities. Each language has its specificities, but in English, for example, “gay,” “lesbian,” and “bisexual” are neutral terms that do not carry negative associations. Look for neutral terms in your own language.

- ★ Transvestites and transsexuals are not the same thing. Transvestites are people who prefer to dress in clothes traditionally used by the opposite gender. Transsexuals are people whose bodies do not conform to their sense of gender identity; in other words, anatomical males who view themselves as female, and anatomical females who view themselves as male. Transsexuals may or may not choose to undergo the costly and painful surgery to physically change their sex.

- ★ When writing about sexual minorities, it is very important to make sure you actually talk to some of them as you prepare your piece. Gays, lesbians and others have hopes, dreams, and fears just like everybody else. They have careers and interests and families just like everyone else. Do not assume you know what their lives are like or who they are without talking to any of them about it.

- ★ Many people have strong feelings about sexual minorities. Just because some authorities, politicians, clerics and others may use offensive terms and expressions when discussing gays and lesbians does not mean you are required, as a journalist, to include this sort of insulting language in your material. If necessary, paraphrase their words. If you decide to quote them directly, you should mention that sexual minorities consider such language to be insulting and inflammatory.

- ★ You should not accept without question the opinion of doctors and researchers who argue that sexual minorities are likely to recruit children, spread HIV intentionally or act in other ways harmful to society. If someone tells you, for example, that 50% of gay men molest young boys, ask them for very specific information about where they found that statistic. People who call themselves experts often use this kind of misin-

formation or distort studies in an effort to influence public opinion against sexual minorities.

★ Many stories on sexual minorities often focus on crime, especially attacks on, or murders, of people with non-traditional sexual orientations. These stories often treat the victims as the criminals, as if they are to blame for being attacked because they are different from other people. It is important to remember in these cases that the criminals are the attackers, not those who are attacked. Often journalists just report without question the opinions of the authorities, who themselves share the view that the victims somehow deserved to be attacked.

★ Because sexual minorities are often hidden from society, it can be difficult to find people to talk to. The best approach to start is to contact groups and NGOs that represent them. Talk to the organisers to develop a general understanding of their concerns, and ask them if they can help to put you in touch with other members of their groups. Also try to talk to others not involved in the groups, who may have a different perspective or may offer more forthright or straightforward thoughts and opinions.

★ Do not believe all the stereotypes you may hear about gays, lesbians and other sexual minorities. Many people believe, for example, that gay men can be easily divided into “actives” and “passives,” with the passive ones being those who appear effeminate. That sounds good in theory, but sexual roles tend to be more complicated and nuanced in the real world. It is also not true that all gay men are artistic, that all lesbians either hate men or want to be men, or that men who dress like women are automatically homosexual.

Case studies

This headline is an excellent example of how unconscious biases can result in statements that distort reality. The phrase essentially blames the woman for her own death and those of her mother and children, since it indicates that her rejection of a man's advances "led to" the slayings. The truth is that the man's violent nature, not anything the woman did, "led to" murder. A woman, lesbian or not, obviously has the right to turn down a man without having to fear being slaughtered. The headline further implies, without stating directly, that the reason she turned him down was precisely because she was a lesbian rather than that she simply had no desire to sleep with him.

10. a) **Lesbian's rejection led to a massacre — Victim's sex adventures**

A drunken killer massacred a family of four after his sexual advances were rejected by a lesbian mother, a court was told yesterday.

Scrap metal dealer David Morris bludgeoned divorcee Mandy Power to death with an iron pole, the jury heard. He then did the same to her daughters Katie, 10, and eight-year old Emily, and her invalid mother Doris Dawson, 80, to ensure no witnesses were left alive. Patrick Harrington QC, prosecuting, told Swansea Crown Court the attacks were so ferocious that each of the victim's skull was crushed and Mrs. Power had 38 separate injuries. "This was not simply murder, this was a massacre," he added. "In each case, their heads were smashed with such force that massive bone damage was done to each of them." "It happened to the invalid grandmother, Doris Dawson, even as she lay in bed." Mr. Harrington said Morris, 39, was waiting when 34-year-old Mrs. Power returned home with her children after baby-sitting for her sister in June 1999. He exploded in a "violent rage" when she spurned his advances, the barrister said. He claimed Morris then cleaned himself up in the bathroom before starting five separate fires at the house in Clydach, South Wales, to destroy evidence.

The newspaper compounds the problem with this headline accompanying a sidebar providing details of the woman's life. Stressing the "sex adventures" angle might attract additional readers but again suggests that the woman has essentially been punished for having a good time. The article indicates, however, that she was also a loving mother involved in a stable relationship and was not, in fact, currently interested in additional "sex adventures."

◀ In covering the trial, the journalist is expected to relay to readers the points made by counsel and witnesses, even if those points are biased or mistaken. In this case, however, there is a subtle difference between a murder taking place after a rejection, as the first sentence of the article states, and the headline's implication that the rejection somehow caused the massacre.

If the victim's sexual orientation is going to be mentioned right at the start of the story, the journalist should make some effort to indicate what role it played in the murder. Otherwise, it comes across as just a racy detail that adds nothing to the reader's understanding of the story.

◀ "Invalid" is an archaic word that is considered insulting because it conveys an impression of weakness or impotence. It is fine to refer to someone as "disabled" or as having a disability.

Morris is also accused of desecrating Mrs. Power's body, which was found by fire-fighters after her home was set alight. Jurors were told that, shortly before her death, Mrs Power had begun a lesbian relationship of "frightening" intensity with Alison Lewis, a 32-year-old former policewoman.

Mr. Harrington acknowledged that the "false finger of suspicion" had originally pointed towards Mrs. Power's lesbian lover and her husband, a police inspector.

Mrs. Lewis and husband Steven, who is still in the force, were arrested in

June 2000. Their homes, cars and clothes were thoroughly searched as a result of what counsel described as "rationally based but unfounded suspicions". Morris did not become the main focus of the inquiry until March 2001.

He repeatedly lied while being questioned by police and gave differing accounts

of his movements on the night of the murders, it was claimed. But forensic experts discovered that fragments of paint on a gold chain found at Mrs. Power's house matched paint in Morris's kitchen. Mr. Harrington said Morris initially denied owning the chain but, shortly before the trial, admitted it probably was his. Jurors also heard that, on the day after the murders, Morris told a friend he had been having a relationship with Mrs. Powers and had left a chain in the house. He persuaded the friend to buy him a replacement. Morris, of Craig-cefn-parc, Swansea Valley, denies four counts of murder and the trial, expected to last 14 weeks continues.

◀ Given existing prejudice against people whose sexual orientation differs, it's not surprising that the police would focus their suspicions on the lesbian aspect of their lives, as if some inevitable connection exists between homosexuality and murder. If the counsel explained what the "rationally based" suspicions were actually based on other than bias, it would be useful to include it in the article.

Metro, London, April 23 2002

This story makes a real effort to present the situation of gay people in Albania objectively and fairly. However, it depends for its information solely on two sources, both of them gay. It would have been helpful to include interviews with government officials, psychologists, and others who have had to deal with the issue. In addition, the article includes no mention of lesbians. Was lesbianism also outlawed? Do any women belong to the gay association?

10. b) **Homosexuals in Albania: Outlaws**

Tirana — On Aug. 17, 2002, Bashkim Arapi took a dose of poison. Several hours later he passed away at a hospital in Tirana, the Albanian capital.

The only person at his side was his partner of 12 years. A handful of people attended the funeral. No one from his immediate family or relatives came to pay their respects to the deceased. He died abandoned and scorned by the majority of the population. Just because he was president of the Association of Homosexuals of Albania.

“The Albanian population is strongly anti-homosexual. The latest public opinion polls show that the vast majority of citizens see us as sick people.

Publicly declaring yourself as a homosexual means you cannot get a decent job, your whole family disavows you. Only Albanians know what it is like to have your family turn its back on you,” says Naser Almalek, the association’s secretary. He is one of the few members of the organisation who dares talk to the media openly and under his real name.

The association tried to organize a proper funeral on its own. “We tried to do something ourselves. We held a wake in our friend’s home, in accordance with our tradition. We collected some money, with the help of our Italian friends, and organised a funeral,” says Almalek.

He stands calmly in the La Voglia bar, close to downtown Tirana. Almalek, 30, is of Arab origin. A dentist by training, he received his degree in Pristina, Kosovo.

He sits there, sporting freshly dyed black hair and isn’t afraid to size up every man in the bar. The square outside is full of young men, whom he watches thoughtfully.

This is a moving example of the tragedies that can occur when gays are not accepted. But it would have been useful to have more details. Was Arapi known to be depressed before his suicide? Was there something in particular that caused him to commit suicide at this specific point in time? What kind of poison was it? Who found him? Did he and his partner live together? As president of the association, was he open about his sexuality? Did his parents and other family members know he was gay? It is also inaccurate to say that he was abandoned and scorned by “the majority” of Albanians. Undoubtedly, most Albanians did not know who he was, so they could not have abandoned and scorned him.

◀ What were the percentages? What questions, exactly, were asked? When a source refers to an opinion poll, the journalist should ask for specific references and data, cite the details, and then interview the pollster, if possible, for more information.

◀ What does he mean when he says that “only Albanians” know what it is like to be abandoned by family members? Does he mean that people in other cultures do not suffer pain when facing such rejection? What is Almalek’s own relationship with his family? Have they disavowed him or do they accept his sexual orientation?

◀ If he is openly gay, is he able to practice dentistry? Who are his patients? If they know, it would have been interesting to try to interview one or two of them and ask them how they feel about it.

Almalek is hesitant to say where gays usually meet in Tirana. He's worried that could endanger their safety, because they have been beaten in the past after their rendezvous points were discovered. But they mostly meet in parks, invariably under the cover of darkness.

According to Almalek, gays resort to special signs and phrases to recognise each other and arrange meetings. Again, with security being an issue, he is not willing to demonstrate. "Our members' families mostly don't know what their sons are up to. If homosexuals keep their sexuality secret, behind walls, things are mostly all right. Their families don't reject them. The pressure is enormous. Arapi could not take it. That is why he killed himself," says Almalek, describing what gays face in Albania.

However, sources from non-governmental organisations dealing with human rights say young Albanians often are willing to abuse the association to flee the country.

Almalek confirms that such things have happened. "A while ago I was supposed to attend a big gay event in the U.S. The travel and hotel expenses were paid for, but it was extremely hard to get a visa. The reason is obvious: our members are young people and there is a large probability that some of them might choose to stay in the U.S. This case shows that our credibility has fallen among diplomatic circles in Tirana," he concludes.

Probably the best example of this phenomenon is the case of Arip Selimi, a former player of the Partizani Tirana soccer club. He could not find work abroad but did not want to stay in Albania. He wanted out of the country and that is why he joined the Association of Homosexuals. "I did not have a choice," says Selimi, smiling as we talk in a Tirana bar. He is back on vacation and in addition to his Albanian passport, now has a foreign one.

"If you want to leave this country you have to be ready for anything. I'm not the first to do something like this," he continues. Through the association Selimi received an invitation to visit a gay group abroad. That's how he got his visa. Selimi is not willing to discuss his association

◀ Again, was there some precipitating event that prompted Arapi's suicide? Or was it just a build-up of pressure over years and years?

◀ Who are these other sources and NGOs? Why has the journalist not included interviews or quotes from any of them?

◀ What foreign passport does he have? And is he gay, or did he just pretend to be gay so he could join the association, receive an invitation to leave the country, and stay abroad? The article does not make that clear.

membership. He just smiles, changes the subject, and orders another round of drinks. “What can you do, times are hard here in Albania. You have to decide—dignity or visa. It is not an easy decision,” says Almalek.

The association has 30 active members and about 200 other activists, but only Almalek was willing to talk to the media.

This isn’t strange since in Albania homosexuality was criminalized until 1995. Article 137 of the Penal Code clearly said that homosexuality was a crime and that anyone discovered to be homosexual faced up to 10 years in prison.

The law was changed in June that year, immediately before the Association of Homosexuals was officially registered. “Our biggest victory was in January 1995, when Parliament legalized homosexual relationships. Now the law bans only forced homosexual relations and relations with minors,” Almalek says.

Several members of the association have received international commendations for their work. “Our community got its highest international recognition in 1995, when Genz Xh., one of our members, received the Filip di Suco human rights award in Washington,” says Almalek.

But his facial expression changes as he recalls that Xh. then decided to stay abroad.

“That was a major setback for the association and it motivated many young men to follow his example. But that’s not happening anymore,” says Almalek.

Beta/MDI, Belgrade/London, 25 September 2002

The journalist should have included information from foreign embassies about their attitude toward inviting gays abroad. Did it change after some people tried to stay away after leaving on a short-term visa?

◀ What is the difference between someone who is an active member and the others who are activists?

◀ Did this apply to lesbians as well, or just male homosexuals?

◀ What exactly is this award? Who offers it? And who is Genz Xh? And what did he do to earn the award?

◀ Did he stay abroad legally or illegally? If it was legally, there should not be a problem for others to receive invitations. If it was illegally, the journalist should have interviewed American diplomats in Albania for comment.

◀ How many other people followed his example and emigrated? Again, did many people stay away illegally after being invited specifically for gay-related events?

11. Political opposition and dissidents

Political opposition and dissidents

One of the major struggles of post-Communist countries has been to find a way to accommodate a diversity of political views and accept the expression of divergent perspectives as a normal and natural element of civic society. Some have proved more successful in making that transition than others and have taken strenuous steps to level the playing field for opposition parties and others whose opinions may not conform to the majority.

In many countries and regions, however, the process remains incomplete. Even as they profess a willingness to tolerate other viewpoints, local and national governments frequently continue to erect legal, political and economic obstacles to make it more difficult for citizens in opposition to have their voices heard. At times, people who disagree with the orientation of those in power are treated as disloyal or even traitorous, and may be unfairly charged with criminal activity.

Journalists and media outlets sometimes acquiesce in this suppression of opposing views, for a variety of reasons. They themselves may be under significant pressure from both authorities and business interests. Or the journalists may genuinely believe that one or the other side in their society's ongoing debate is illegitimate and does not deserve the right to present its arguments. Often media outlets come down on the government's side, although journalists representing opposition forces may also try to bar publication of the official version of events.

Allowing access to all participants in a debate is—or should be—one of the key roles of the press in any society. Here are a few ways to ensure this happens:

- ★ Identify gaps in your media outlet's coverage by reviewing the archives. Have you focused exclusively on one political party or quoted only people who hold just one point of view? Have opposition leaders, and others who challenge the authorities, been given an opportunity to respond to charges made against them? Have dissenting voices been completely ignored?

- ★ Make sure not to limit coverage of important issues to the perspective of the majority or of the authorities. If the government takes action or makes pronouncements, find people who disagree with the policies being proposed or pursued. This could be other politicians, but it could also be academics, representatives of non-governmental organisations, business people, or passers-by on the street.

- ★ Cultivate sources among opposition leaders. Make contact with them and arrange an informational meeting to discuss their concerns, opinions, beliefs and ideas. Do not promise that you will always include their perspective but encourage them to call you when something of note happens and they wish to comment.

★ When the government proposes a new law or regulation, analyse it carefully. Figure out who it helps and who it hurts—and then make sure to call a representative of the groups of people it will hurt. Do not accept the authorities’ arguments justifying their policies at face value.

★ Do not describe people who oppose the government as “dissidents” or as engaging in “dissident thinking.” Remember that in a pluralistic society, a diversity of views and political positions is a normal state of affairs. People who disagree, however fiercely, with government policy should not be relegated to a special category for exercising a basic human right. They are simply people who disagree with those in charge.

★ Do not exaggerate differences between the positions held by various individuals or parties. Often people themselves, especially politicians, will overstate their case just to score points with the public or to make themselves appear courageous. When writing about sensitive issues in which differences of opinion exist, make sure you characterise the various positions accurately and avoid inflammatory rhetoric.

★ Opposition leaders or others who disagree with the government can be as dogmatic and authoritarian as those in power. Just because they oppose the current authorities does not mean that they would behave completely differently once in power. Challenge them to move beyond anti-government slogans and explain their programme. As a journalist, you should be sceptical of the claims of those on all sides of a societal debate or issue.

Case studies

In Serbian, “Shiptar” is a derogatory word for “Albanian” and is always used to generate associations with terrorism and extremism. The headline and subhead also create the impression that the crisis is solely the fault of the Albanians from Kosovo because they are ruthless and will stop at nothing to achieve their goal of independence.

11. a) **What do Shiptar leaders offer as a solution to the Kosovo crisis?** **— Independence through war or peace**

The Serbs will not relinquish territory, Rugova wants an independent Kosovo, Thaci dreams of a greater Albania, Surroi suggests a triple Taiwan scenario.

Belgrade — Events in the south of Serbia show that the Shiptars want more than an independent Kosovo — they wish to fulfil their one-and-a-half century-old dream of a greater Albania.

Among Shiptars in Pristina there is talk of a new war. Well-informed sources have told *Glas* that Thaci planned action in the south of Serbia for September, but changed his mind because of the Kosovo elections, in which he hoped to secure an easy victory. Now that Rugova has won and that, in Belgrade, Milosevic has been replaced by Vojislav Kostunica, a man the world respects, Thaci has become nervous. He is impatient to finish his work before the December elections in Serbia and win points with his compatriots before the Kosovo elections scheduled for spring.

The former Prosecutor of the Hague Tribunal, Richard Goldstone, endorses what he defines as conditional independence for Kosovo. Goldstone explains that he would give the Shiptars a five-year deadline to establish democratic institutions. If they fail, Goldstone would “restore their previous status”. This way of easing political tension is unknown in political history.

Thaci believes that he can only reach the political top in Kosovo again by attacking Serbian policemen and fomenting war — methods he used to enter the political scene in the first place. It is

This overstates the case, since the rest of the article makes clear that only some Albanians from Kosovo want a greater Albania. Moreover, the journalist’s tone is disparaging of any aspiration for a greater Albania— even though many Serbs also dreamed of a greater Serbia.

◀ Who are these Kosovars talking of a new war? What are they saying? And we need to know more about these “well-informed sources” to be able to judge their information. Are they Albanians? Serbs? How are they in a position to know anything of Thaci’s plans?

◀ This is an extremely broad—and unclear—claim. Which way of easing tensions, exactly, is unknown? The five-year deadline? The threat to restore the previous status? Has the journalist researched all of political history throughout the ages to seek out support for this claim? Or is it just the journalist’s opinion?

difficult to believe that he will be able to count on the kind of the foreign support he did two years ago. The fact that there is a well-equipped hospital in the village of Dobrosin, the main terrorist stronghold in the south of Serbia, shows that careful preparations have been made. This worries supporters of the more peaceful option, Rugova most of all, who are concerned that the international community might turn their back on them.

The leader of the so-called KLA, Hashim Thaci, is impatient. It is believed that he is, in a way, exacting revenge on Rugova because the latter won the local elections. Ibrahim Rugova believes that negotiations with the authorities in Belgrade can and must take place but only regarding one topic—Kosovo's independence.

After so much suffering it is too late to talk about a division of Kosovo or about Kosovo as a third Yugoslav republic. We support independence, but we shall strive to achieve it by democratic means, negotiations and a referendum on the future of Kosovo—a source in Rugova's Democratic League of Kosovo told Glas.

Journalist and publicist Veton Surroi endorses a triple Taiwan scenario. While the American administration suggests a federal relationship among Serbia, Montenegro and Kosovo, Surroi proposes a relationship akin to the one between China and Taiwan, in which Serbia, Montenegro and Kosovo would not be independent states but would administer their respective territories. China considers Taiwan one of its provinces and accepts its sovereignty but not its independence.

However, Surroi shrewdly disregards the fact that China has the right of veto in the UN Security Council where she can block every Taiwanese proposal.

There is little doubt that Kosovo and Metohija will, for a long time to come, remain on the agenda of the Security Council, OSCE, EU... Let's hope the language of force will be replaced by one of diplomacy.

Glas Javnosti, Belgrade, 27 November 2000

◀ This all may be true, but the journalist provides no evidence to back it up. Where did she get this information? Who did she talk to? Did she try to talk to the participants themselves?

◀ Again, the implication here is that only the Albanians in Kosovo and their allies have used the language of force and that only the Serbs have used the language of diplomacy.

The headline immediately suggests that there is something illegitimate in commemorating an event in which thousands of people were killed. The journalist is clearly offended by the nature of the memorial service but does not interview any Muslims about why they felt it was important to attend or any Serbs about why exactly they are upset.

11. b) Manipulating a commemoration

Yesterday in Potocari near Srebrenica

The Muslim and Croatian members of the Presidency of Bosnia and Herzegovina, Alija Izetbegovic and Ante Jelavic respectively, attended a Muslim commemoration in Potocari, near Srebrenica today, thereby lending the gathering a political flavour.

Furthermore, the head of the Islamic religious community, Mustafa Ceric, addressed 3.000 Muslims present for the religious ceremony with messages that overstepped religious boundaries.

The event was more like an invasion by Muslim and international forces of the eastern part of Republika Srpska than a prayer for those who died in Srebrenica.

The organisers of the gathering ignored the recommendations of the Office of the High Representative in Bosnia and Herzegovina, which had been accepted by the authorities in RS, that the limited space made it impossible to accommodate 15 buses with about 700 Muslims.

Instead, 56 buses and many private cars from the Federation of Bosnia and Herzegovina arrived.

Today's gathering in Potocari was attended by the High Representative Wolfgang Petritsch, the head of the UN mission in BiH Jacques Klein, the ambassadors of the USA, Croatia, Turkey, Iran, Egypt, Switzerland, Great Britain and Portugal, the president and prime minister of the Federation of BiH Ejup Ganic and Ethem Bicakcic respectively and others.

The arrival and stay of the Muslims in Potocari took place with no security or other problems.

Serbian policemen were deployed at intervals of 50 meters along the 80 kilometre demarcation

◀ This implies that the two officials should not have attended the ceremony even though the event was a major turning point in the war. The journalist could have asked them, or their representatives, why they felt it necessary to participate.

◀ What does it mean that he “overstepped religious boundaries”? What exactly did he say? In what way was it inappropriate? The journalist should be reporting his words rather than making judgements about them.

◀ The use of the term “invasion” is inflammatory. It creates an impression of hordes of Muslims and others running wild over the site when in fact they came to hold a memorial service.

◀ Why did the journalist not interview the organisers and ask them about the recommendations? And if the space was so limited, how is it that the site could accommodate 56 buses and 3000 Muslims?

◀ Since the event apparently took place with no unrest or other complications, it contradicts the contention that no more than 700 Muslims could be accommodated and that this was in some way an “invasion.”

line running from Luka near Vlasenica to Potocari. Bratunac, Potocari and Srebrenica were today full of vehicles, Sfor soldiers, international policemen (IPTF), international organisations and journalists from the international media.

Tanjug/Politika, Belgrade, July 12 2000

12. Photography and image

Photography and image

In many ways, the pictures that accompany a story play as crucial a role in transmitting information as the words themselves. Whether it is a newspaper photograph or a video image, visual elements can deliver powerful and often emotional messages to readers and viewers. Those messages are not always apparent even to those selecting the images, who may themselves be unaware of the subliminal or unconscious impact.

When deciding how to illustrate a story, it is important to keep in mind that the images may remain with the readers or viewers for a long time. They may not even read the text, or may notice no more than the headline or photo caption. So it is critical that you select images that genuinely reflect the spirit of the material rather than contradict or undermine what you hope to convey.

Here are some suggestions for how to do that:

- ★ Make sure the image corresponds to the essence of the story. Sometimes the most powerful photograph or video clip has only tangential relevance to what the piece is about. A picture of a hungry-looking refugee begging, for example, might evoke sympathy in some and disgust in others, but it is probably not appropriate for an article about asylum-seekers organising to demand better living conditions.

- ★ The journalist and the photographer should discuss the story beforehand and, if possible, work as a team. At many newspapers, journalists and photographers pay little attention to each other and forget that their responsibilities, while distinct, are intimately linked. Writers should recognise that more people will read a well-illustrated story. Photographers should understand that a compelling text provides a crucial context for their images.

- ★ It is best if the journalist who has written or produced the piece has some say in which photos or images get used, or at least is informed of the selection. Reporters are generally the ones who are closest to the story, and including photos without consulting them means running the risk of distorting the meaning or intent of a story.

- ★ Does the caption accurately reflect or describe the photograph? It is always a good idea to include a caption to place the illustration in the proper context unless you are convinced that it is completely self-explanatory. However, make sure that the journalist who has written the article has read and approved the caption to minimize the possibility of mistakes.

- ★ Be wary of including photos that only serve to reinforce stereotypes. Such images tend to be boring and provide little in the way of new or enlightening information. Everybody has seen hundreds of photos of prostitutes displaying themselves on street corners. A far more interesting choice would be one that would show her in some

other context or an unexpected situation—attending university classes, for example, or cooking dinner for her children.

★ Do not alter photographs in ways except to improve the quality of the image or obscure the face of someone who should not be identified. It is extremely easy these days to manipulate visual images technologically—for example, by removing certain people or placing two individuals closer together. But to do so fundamentally distorts the journalistic imperative to convey information accurately and honestly.

★ Be careful with images of extreme violence or other graphic displays. It can be important to use them to illustrate certain kinds of material—about wartime atrocities, for example—or to drive home a point about discrimination or social injustice. But there can be a fine line between effective journalism and exploitation. If the illustration only upsets people and does not force them to think at the same time, it is probably best to reconsider your selection.

13. Training modules

Training modules

A training session on reporting diversity can be as short as a couple of hours or as long as several days or even a week. It may be presented as part of a longer journalism course or as a stand-alone seminar. Since the content and structure will depend upon the particular needs of the journalists who participate, it is impossible to offer hard and fast rules on how to proceed.

However, the modular approach offered here allows trainers to pick and choose the elements that will work best for the particular audience. The questions raised in each module can be discussed in brief or at length, but a good rule of thumb is to allow approximately half a day to explore fully the issues addressed in a given module.

In framing your discussions, try to use the broadest selection of examples possible, including material written by the participants, articles from recent copies of regional newspapers, and case studies from this manual, if appropriate to the subject at hand. Remember, too, that the modules are designed to build on each other, with each one helping to foster the understanding and awareness needed to explore these complex journalistic problems.

The following guidelines should also help.

- 1) For a half-day seminar, focus on Module One.
- 2) For a full-day seminar, focus on Modules One and Two
- 3) For a two-day seminar, focus on the Modules One through Four
- 4) For seminars longer than two days, try to work in all of the modules

Whether the seminar is a half-day or a week, encourage all participants to develop an individual action plan that will help sustain their own commitment to reporting diversity.

Pre-seminar preparation

Pre-Workshop Assignments for Participants.

The seminar leader should request that each seminar participant provide the following information at least four weeks before the start of the seminar. The materials should be sent to the seminar leader for review and packaging.

Each participant should send the following:

- ★ Five editions of the participant's newspaper.

★ An example of a story found in each participant's newspaper or from a radio or television broadcast that the participant considers to be a well reported, well written, and balanced story.

★ An example of a story in the participant's newspaper or from a radio or television broadcast that the participant considers to be an example of a lack of diversity in reporting, writing, and editing.

Each participant should provide the following data:

★ The various ethnic groups in the coverage area and estimated population figures.

★ Estimated percent of the population that is under 25, between 25 and 40, between 41 and 60, and over 60.

★ Estimated percentage of women in the coverage area.

A Pre-Workshop Evaluation by Leader

Prior to the opening of the seminar the leader should carefully review the newspapers and broadcasts provided by the seminar participants and the demographic information. The leader should evaluate the strengths and weaknesses of the newspaper. The seminar leader should look for specific examples of inappropriate use of language that would be considered offensive to a segment of the population; look for examples of stereotypes within stories. The leader is reviewing the materials provided by each participant as a reader from the coverage area of the newspaper of each participant.

Examples of the types of strengths and weaknesses the seminar leader should be looking for the following:

1. Specific ethnic or racial groups are covered as problems within the community based upon the language within the stories or the tone of the story.

The newspaper provides coverage of disputes involving various racial or ethnic groups but there is no coverage of those same ethnic groups in pos-

itive, productive, and contributory processes within their communities or the overall community.

2. Over the course of the week's coverage, crime stories that are reported are primarily involving perpetrators from one ethnic or racial group.

Descriptions of crime suspects are all from one racial or ethnic group and are very generic rather than being specific. Example: "Dark male, 5'8" tall and 200 pounds" rather than a description that included clothing, shoes, etc.

3. Inconsistent editing

Do the stories that are reported in the newspaper or in radio and television broadcasts use language that is offensive or stereotypical to a certain ethnic group, older people, people with disabilities, or women?

4. Poor local coverage

Do the newspaper, and the radio or television broadcasts consistently include new stories about local events that are inclusive of various racial or ethnic groups, older people, people with disabilities, or women?

5. Inadequate coverage of ethnic communities

Do the newspaper and the radio or television broadcasts provide coverage of specific ethnic groups or religious minorities? If there is coverage does it include use of clichés, stereotypes, or offensive characterisations of those groups?

6. No inclusion of ethnic community members in regular coverage.

Do the newspaper and the radio or television broadcasts provide coverage of business men and women, doctors, attorneys, and professors as sources in stories who are members of various ethnic, religious, or racial groups? Are they consulted regarding topics that are not related to their race, ethnicity, or religious affiliation? Are women used as sources on stories about all elements of life in the community?

An example: A story focuses on doctors at a local

hospital who are discussing the health needs of pregnant women and the importance of prenatal care. Are there doctors quoted who are either women or members of religious or ethnic minority groups?

7. Not enough women, minorities, and “others” in images that run in the newspaper.

Do the newspaper and the radio and television broadcasts provide photos of people who are members of minority groups in routine coverage? Women, older people, or people with disabilities?

An example: Are pictures used in the story about the doctors who are advocating better prenatal care? Who was chosen to be photographed? Male or female; a doctor from an ethnic group? What about a doctor who is disabled?

The seminar leader should organise the materials pulled from participant news examples and use them as examples for the modules that follow. If it

is not possible to complete the pre-seminar evaluation of samples forwarded by participants, each module provides additional materials that can be used as examples.

The seminar leader should develop a mechanism for collecting materials for use in the seminar process and use those examples for future seminars as needed.

8. No sense of historical context in stories where race, ethnicity, or religious affiliation are elements of the story.

Does the newspaper, radio, or television news organisation provide an accurate historical context in stories where ethnicity, race, or religious affiliation are relevant to the story? If so, whose history? How do we determine whether the historical context is accurate and appropriate?

Materials provided by the participants, together with the reader’s analysis, will provide essential material for the leader’s interventions and group discussions during the workshop or training.

Module 1: HISTORY VERSUS DIVERSITY

Goal:

Provide an opportunity to discuss the history of exclusion within our communities and the impact that exclusion has had on the development of our communities. By briefly looking back, each participant should be able to engage in building a new model of inclusion within their work in the media.

Principle:

The news media has the opportunity to shape the discussion and define the areas of common ground through accurate, unbiased reporting.

The result: All segments of our society will participate in easing real and perceived isolation that has been a historical reality for many groups.

The media's role in the continued conflicts within a community, a state, or a nation has been the focus of studies and suggestions for change for decades. Whether the discussion is related to new immigrants or to ethnic groups that have long been a part of the national landscape, journalists have a role to play in providing residents with a sense of what the shifts in populations or the influence of long standing minority cultures means to the development of the nation as it stands today or as it will be in the future.

Every nation has one or more groups that are not considered part of the mainstream. In the United Kingdom, immigrants from the former British colonies of Africa, the Caribbean, or South Asia have for decades complained of exclusion, stereotyping, and hatred from whites. For most of the former colonies of European nations, there has been a negative reaction when citizens from the colonies have moved to the land with which, because of historical circumstance, they share a language. Immigrants from former colonies have discovered, much to their dismay, that having a

language in common does not necessarily mean a welcoming attitude.

In many other countries in Europe, the presence of immigrant populations has brought forth misconceptions and mistrust that are often not understood or addressed until major conflict occurs. Meanwhile, in other nations the divisions of culture have existed for hundreds of years without redress.

Reporters, just like the rest of the populace, are often caught off guard, unable to gather the historical perspective to promote community understanding and tolerance. Rather, journalists have been accused of fueling conflicts and hatred, and of exacerbating divisions in communities because we have not been able to provide true historical perspective as we cover the news.

The societal history of exclusion has taken its toll across the world. There is no state that has been left untouched by the conflicts that arise from differences that exist, or that we perceive as existing and making us different from our neighbours.

Today, many members of our community may not know why historical exclusion began; however, all know that exclusion is an integral part of the fabric of community life. Those who are in the minority are, or consider themselves to be, invisible. Sooner or later, those who are excluded will become frustrated, will demand inclusion, and their demands may engender a reaction that leads to more intolerance, bias, further exclusion, or violent conflict.

The news media have a pivotal role in easing the tension created by historical exclusion. The news media provide an opportunity for all people to participate through the free flow of information, a safe place for debate and, while the debates rage, the opportunity to be included in coverage of the community on matters that are central to day-

to-day life. In fact, the first step is the inclusion of all groups in day-to-day coverage of social issues such as health and welfare, community economics, education, and family life.

It is the coverage of everyday life with an eye to including everyone that provides journalists with the rare opportunity to build a diverse community process without relying on partisanship.

Journalists are to be or to become the recorders of life in our communities. They have the opportunity to move throughout the community gathering information, gathering facts that they can knit together into stories of the lives of the people who make up society. Journalists, without being partisan, can create a public space for discussion that leads to common ground within diverse communities.

Example: A newspaper journalist develops a series of stories about economic strife in a major city. The reporter works hard to find sources from various ethnic, racial, or religious groups, older residents, and women who are struggling economically. By carefully choosing the sources to be used, the journalist has taken a step toward creating a common group as readers who have the opportunity to see that they share experiences with people they believed irreconcilably different.

Note to Leader

★ Provide other examples of stories that may have provided an opportunity to view this type of inclusive coverage from the newspapers or broadcast examples provided by the participants prior to the seminar.

★ Ask the participants to brainstorm on how stories could have been more inclusive. What would the reporter do to expand the coverage with an eye to diversity?

★ The first discussion should be with the entire group. As the participants provide their feedback,

the seminar leader should begin to ask questions of the participants regarding their experiences with specific groups in the context of the example being used to spark discussion.

A few examples of the questions to be asked by the participants:

★ Have you had the experience of working on a story with people from a different ethnic, religious or racial background? What was the hardest part of the experience? What was the reaction from the person or persons who were your sources?

★ Were you able to use the information in a story? Was the story specifically about the ethnic or racial group only? Would the story have been more effective if the scope were expanded to discuss the realities of economics across racial or ethnic lines?

Next, the leader should provide a second example that the participants will discuss in small groups of three or four. Each small group should develop a coverage plan to improve the story's inclusiveness.

The seminar leader should then ask each small group to develop at least three conclusions related to diversity gleaned from the discussion in this module. The "Lessons Learned" are recorded and posted on the seminar room walls. The seminar leader must make it clear to the journalists that this exercise shows that the inclusion process will help journalists in their role as writers of history while providing an opportunity for a balanced, comprehensive, and inclusive view of the community to the news media's consumers.

Based upon the notes, each participant should be able to state one action step that they will use to add a new historical context in their coverage. Each participant should be very specific about the next step. The seminar leader should seek specifics that can be taken home and used by each participant. A form for action steps is available at the end of the manual.

Module 2: WHAT IS NEWS?

Goal:

Defining what is news with diversity in mind.

Principle:

Diversity and the voices of minority members of the community enrich and enliven the coverage of the community as a whole.

Everybody has a story, but not every story is news! To determine what is news, we must start with the above question.

The seminar leader asks: What is your definition of news?

Note to the seminar leader

★ Each participant should be asked to define what is news in writing on paper provided for the exercise. Once everyone has written their definitions, the participants should each state their answers while the seminar leader records.

★ The recording of the definitions can be done on large pieces of paper which are posted throughout the room so that the definitions can be clearly seen as the participants complete this exercise. The names of the participants do not have to be attached to the definitions.

As this exercise shows, many of us have to struggle with defining what is news. Why? Because there are many layers to the definition. Each of us brings our own historical perspective to defining whether certain events constitute news that should be reported to readers and viewers.

The staples of journalism: those definitions that tend to be most common:

★ Inform the public about current events that reporters, and editors determine relevant to our readers.

★ Provide official information from numerous sources to the community.

★ Cover what reporters and editors deem to be important information which must be provided to our readers.

Note to the seminar leader

★ Ask the participants: "What are some of the new elements that should be included in the definition of news now that we are defining the importance of diversity and inclusion in our coverage?"

Each of us defines news based upon our personal life experiences. A journalist who is raising a child with disabilities will view related stories as more news worthy than someone who has not experienced life with a person with disabilities. A person who is caring for an elderly relative will define certain topics related to the elderly as more newsworthy than someone who is not caring for an older person.

The seminar leader asks: How do our personal experiences impact our definition of news? What new elements would be added to the definition of news based upon personal experiences, ethnicity, age, race, religious affiliation, and gender? The discussion can be a large group discussion or you can break the group into smaller groups. Each group should designate someone to take notes and report the responses back to the entire group at the end of the discussion.

The seminar leader should ask: What does the group think about what they discussed with their families about the night before; what did they talk about over coffee or breakfast or lunch the day before? What were the things that left an important impression upon them as they went about their normal activities as a member of the com-

munity — not as they went about their duties as a journalist?

Encourage argument, questioning, and challenging statements. The leader should begin to verbally edit and sharpen the statements based upon the discussion. The following statements can be used to help draw participants into a discussion regarding the definition of news in a diverse society where that diversity becomes an element of how we provide information to our communities:

- ★ Not just covering people who are traditional news makers or are the most prominent businessmen.

An example of opportunities for news stories here would be small businessmen and women who are helping to employ residents, adding to the economy, providing innovation in the workplace.

- ★ Personal, so that people can relate to the news.

- ★ A means to understand our communities, and the rights, obligations, and capacities of our members.

- ★ News is relevant.

Note to the seminar leader

Ask the participants what they think the last statement means and how it fits into their understanding of the role of a journalist in the diverse and ever changing world, region, nation, and community where they work. What values are inherent in this last definition of news?

The seminar leader should ask: The seminar leader should engage the participants in a discussion about relevance. Relevance to whom? Will the relevance issue be different if the reader is a woman, a woman over 65, or a woman from a specific ethnic background? Encourage a lively discussion about the challenge and opportunity of defining relevance as more layers of diversity are added to the definition of the reader to whom relevance is directed.

The seminar leader should be able to make the following points in recapping the discussion regarding what is news:

- ★ The definitions of news should encompass relevance of the news to people's lives.

- ★ Relevance is difficult to define because there are so many types of people with so many definitions of their own sense of relevance as they consume the information provided to them by the media.

Questions to ask the participants: Is the search for relevance to the widest range of readers more appropriate than defining news based upon the leaders and those who represent the status quo? What are the risks to the newspaper, the journalist—if any—of focusing on relevance rather than maintaining the status quo or the old order in our delivery of information?

Questions to ask the participants: If relevance is the focus, how do we handle the fact that what is relevant to you may not be relevant to me? How do we get both perspectives on relevance into our stories?

More definitions of news to consider

- ★ Those events—large and small—that tell us how we live, where we live, explain our times, and help us continue our human history with knowledge, tolerance and open inquiry.

- ★ That information deemed important by the individual, the group, or the community.

- ★ When determining what is news, you're building into the newspaper process everybody's individual prejudices. When you start down that road then you're going to end up with a much more fractionalised approach to news. Everybody's going to have their own agenda and definition of news.

- ★ A much broader and inclusive view of what is news is needed.

Question for participants: What would you define as a broader and more inclusive view of what is news within your work and your newspaper, radio, or television organisation?

The seminar leader should elicit answers to the question from the participants.

★ To get the discussion rolling or to move it forward ask: What about the impact of diversified staffs: age, gender, ethnic groups, religious backgrounds, sexual orientation?

Since it seems that news is defined by the people who work in the newspapers, the news will by that definition be more diverse if the staff is diverse.

★ What people are talking about?

Since news appears to be what people are talking about we must be able to translate what people are talking about to the staff inside the newspaper.

We must bring news from our neighbours, the coffee shop, the lunch counter and help determine whether there is more to the issues the public talks about that we are missing in our news pages.

Leader's wrap up: As we can see from the discussion on the issue of what is news, each journalist comes at the issue from a different angle. Each participant gave a different definition of what is news and each of us responded differently to the issues and questions raised throughout this exercise. Each of us must consider whether our definition of news matches the definition of news set by our newspapers, radio, or television organisations. If it is not the same, what do we do daily to bridge the gap? Compromise? How can we take the issue of diversity and make it work for each of the stories we work on? How do we move the issue of inclusion and diversity past ourselves as individuals and begin changing the news culture within our organisations? Our communities?

Module 3: WHAT IS DIVERSITY AND WHY DOES IT MATTER?

Goal:

To define journalistic opportunities that will lead to more diverse coverage.

Principle:

Despite our differences—ethnic, political, age, gender, religious, or economic—we are all members of the communities in which we live and work; we all wish to be considered members of the greater community.

It is the common threads of our lives that diversity coverage is designed to address. Doing so engenders understanding, tolerance, and a cohesive community structure with room for debate, disagreement, and even discord with an underlying value of respect for the differences among individuals, groups, and communities.

If people don't see themselves in the media, they will not come to see themselves as a part of the community in which they live. If journalists are to cover the entire community, they must develop ways to ensure that all members of the community are reflected in the coverage.

For example, recent history shows that the reporting of government policy without providing room for diverse voices to be heard regarding those policies has fed racism, sectarianism, and ethnic hatred in many nations.

Leader asks: What are the critical issues of diversity that you believe are not covered by the news media?

The seminar leader should write all responses on large sheets of paper in a place that all participants can see.

Note to leader:

It can be expected that the responses will include such topics as the history of ethnic strife within a

region; the politics of ethnic strife or racial difference; the politics of ethnic, racial, and religious intolerance.

The seminar leader can ask the group to provide recent examples of how the media have helped to strengthen or weaken communities through their coverage. Examples may be local or from Rwanda, the Near East, Canada, Western Europe, etc. In addition, the seminar leader should probe for specifics regarding the reporting that contributed, ultimately, to strife and warfare. The seminar leader should also make the point that the historical connection to the conflicts provides a backdrop that is difficult to overcome if the media's only recourse are stories about the strife, its history, and the politics of both the conflict and any efforts toward reconciliation.

First, we must step back from the clashes and conflicts and take a look at everyday life. The seminar leader must reach back to the previous module and remind the participants that strong diversity coverage begins with the coverage of everyday life. We are looking for ways to include all people in regular, everyday coverage in the most basic way. For example, if people begin to read names that are identifiably from non-majority ethnic groups—names of women, names of persons who are from different racial or religious groups—they will begin to feel that they are a part of the national dialogue and debate.

Journalists should expand their use of sources from various groups. The credibility of the news media will grow as the readers and viewers recognize that there is an interest in including the views and experiences of all segments of the community.

Many newspapers and broadcast organizations, whether in Europe, Africa, Asia, or the Americas, have for decades served primarily as the

arm of reporting what the government has decided and how those decisions will be carried out. In the model of inclusive, diversity journalism, the government statement takes a back seat to telling the story of how government policy and practice has an impact on various members of the community. The journalist works to allow voices from the community to tell the story of government action or inaction.

Once those voices from within the community are heard, we enhance our ability to include larger numbers of people in the debate; the media becomes a forum for the debate that may, over time, allow society to solve its problems in the interest of all its members.

Note to leader:

It must be clear that engendering change does not mean orchestrating change. Journalism is not a crusade. The media provide a place where diverse voices can be heard.

To start, the seminar leader should ask the participants to provide a list of subjects that reflect everyday life. Examples to help elicit discussion: — Health — Education — Personal finance — Children and their development — Religion or faith.

The seminar leader should have examples of news stories from some of these categories to give to the participants. Using those articles as the basis of analysis, discuss how the stories could have been expanded to include more elements of society — by age, ethnic group, disability, gender.

Example: A story on prenatal health care. Are there any doctors who are from minority or ethnic groups? Are there women who are doctors as well as patients? Are there any religious issues that need to be considered when discussing prenatal care? Who could have been used to create a sense of inclusion in a story on this topic? How would you locate those diverse sources?

Note to leader:

Begin a discussion with participants about the demographic information each participant provided prior to the start of the seminar or demographic information you have developed and will use to set the basis for your discussions of diversity within a specific community.

Hypothetical questions to be considered to spark discussion:

If 30% of the population in your community is made up of women between 25 years of age and 40 years of age, What possible impact might that fact have on coverage?

A few answers to help spark the discussion:

These are women who are of childbearing age. They will be interested in matters of health and education as well as information regarding parenting strategies. They will be interested in developing government policies related to health, education and welfare and will want to know how those policies will affect their every day lives.

Leader asks: Are there any other subjects that they might be interested in? Note that this segment of the population's interests will shift once they are no longer of childbearing age. Once they pass childbearing age, what might they be interested in? The seminar leader should suggest that the participants use their own lives as benchmarks for discussion along the following lines.

Are these subjects covered in your newspaper, radio or television broadcasts?

How frequently and how would you evaluate the quality of the coverage? What would you do to add content to your news reports that would meet the information needs of this particular group? By considering the information needs of this group are you also providing information of interest to men? Bear in mind that deciding areas of interest for particular groups does not necessarily mean that others will be excluded.

Note to leader:

Ask the seminar participants their views of the last statement. How can coverage of particular group also benefit others not in that group? Do any of the participants have story ideas or concepts that would validate the statement? Ask the participants to provide concrete examples to illustrate the concept.

★ If 20% of your community population is over 65 years of age: What possible impact might this fact have on coverage?

A few answers to help spark the discussion:

Travel and leisure activity; personal finances (making ends meet after one is no longer working); planning for retirement; health concerns. What other information about this group would be helpful in your efforts to provide coverage of interest to this group of people? Do they travel? Does the travel focus on particular areas of the country or neighbouring countries? Does the travel depend upon the ethnic background of the people in this category? Does it depend upon the economic status of the people in this category?

Note to leader:

As above, ask the seminar participants their views of the last statement. How can coverage of a particular group also benefit members of other groups? Can participants provide story ideas or concepts that would validate the statement? Work with participants to develop concrete examples to illustrate the concept.

★ If the demographics indicate that 30% of the people in the area are under 25 years of age: What possible impact might this statistic have on coverage?

A few answers to help spark discussion:

The Arts (particularly music); personal finances; health and well being. What other information about the interests of this group might be necessary to determine whether there are areas of cover-

age that the newspaper should be aware of or should consider increasing? Sports and leisure activities? Relationships? Does your newspaper cover these topics?

Note to leader:

Explore the same issues as above regarding the benefits to all groups of increasing coverage of those now visible.

The leader should use examples from the review of participants' newspapers and broadcast samples to expand on the focus of this module. The questions can be very specific as related to the ethnicity, age and gender issues within any country or region where the seminar is held.

Workshop exercise:

The participants are divided into groups of four. Each participant takes the newspaper, radio or television broadcast of another participant and reviews the news product to ask questions about representation of key constituents based upon demographic information shared amongst participants. As the participants ask each other questions about the diversity of their audience and the news product, an informal demographic profile is provided based upon what is said. Each participant should take notes during the discussion for reporting back to the entire group.

The participants are looking for:

★ Anecdotal demographic profile.

★ What information is not known that would help determine whether the newspaper is covering all segments of the community.

The results of the review and the small group discussion are presented to the entire workshop. Notes should be taken regarding areas needing improvement to increase diversity coverage for discussion during a later module.

Module 4: SPECIAL DISCUSSION POINTS ON LANGUAGE

Goal:

To develop a sense of the use of language to avoid racial and ethnic stereotyping.

Principle:

Our words have the power to encourage our communities to read our newspapers, listen and view our broadcasts, and believe us. Those same words can perpetuate negative community perceptions about different groups and leave the news media with the appearance of bias and unfairness in our reporting and writing. It is important to consider why certain words just don't work.

Note to leader:

The seminar leader should initiate a discussion using examples from the newspaper articles or radio and television broadcasts provided by the participants. In the case of print examples, photocopy the stories that you will use so that each participant can read and follow the discussion. Broadcast stories should be played for the group.

Most news media do not set out to create stereotypes or division. However, journalists often fail to use language effectively in an effort to eliminate group stereotypes or intolerance. Assuming that today's news media is interested in avoiding the damage caused by the inappropriate use of language, the primary rule for journalists is:

Follow the rules of precision for writing that will allow language to be used in its purest form.

The words we choose are critical in our quest for diversity in media content. The first challenge is to present members of different ethnic and racial groups fairly and accurately by carefully choosing our words, and avoiding stereotypes and clichés that can be seen as slurs.

Some news organisations have launched committees to fix the "problems" of misuse and

misidentification. Others have made issues of language an integral part of their development of rules and regulations related to style.

However, most journalists seldom have the opportunity to sit back and think about why they choose the words they use. The pressure of the clock, space constraints and the ultimate flow of the story often rule our choices. Seldom is there time to debate the best word for the job.

Now that the news media acknowledge the depth of society's diversity, and as we explore the impact that diversity has or should have on our work as journalists, we are forced to take a second look at the words we use.

In fact, the only rationale for examining what we call people and how we describe places is the attempt to report accurately on all segments of our communities and, while doing so, to use the right words for the job. When we carefully look at our use and misuse of language, we are not catering to the politically correct. Rather we are crafting our work using all of the rules and resources available to us.

Using the Dictionary

The first step in the examination of our use and misuse of words is simple:

Use the dictionary. The book is a resource we can reintroduce to our daily work as we grapple with ways to represent accurately and fairly the nuances of our communities.

Times change. Meanings change. The dictionary can remind us of that fact, remind us of the origins of the words we use, and help us to choose the right ones for the stories we write.

An example:

Ghetto: In the 1960s, dictionary definitions described the ghetto as a place where the law forced a group of people to live within a restricted area of a city, and specifically referred to the pogroms in Europe. By today, a second definition

has been added. It allows this word to be used to describe a quarter or section of a city in which members of a minority group live because of social, economic or legal pressure. Key facts included in this secondary definition change the earlier definition that required government action to create a ghetto.

What do reporters and editors have to know before they can use this word?

- 1) only a minority group lives in the area in question, and
- 2) they live there because of social, economic or legal pressure.

Note to leader:

Ask the participants to provide words that can be discussed from their language. The seminar leader should have a few words ready for discussion. Where possible have the participants use the dictionary to review the precise meaning of the words you are discussing. At times this exercise can be very revealing. Where the popular meanings are not accurate, and you find the words are being misused, ask the participants what they believe the impact of the misuse is or has been? Who is most affected by the misuse?

There are indeed places in cities across the world that could be called a ghetto, but journalists must be very careful that all of the facts required to meet the definition's test are present. Once again, the word cannot be used as a catch phrase for any areas of a town that don't seem to fit a middle-class housing standard. Moreover, in most cases, journalists should use the opportunity to be specific and name the area or neighbourhood where the story's action occurs.

Educate readers and sources

How many journalists have written stories about senior citizens and called them "elderly," but did not ask the ages of the people interviewed?

What about a news service story that called a man a "cripple" without describing what his specific condition was? Again look up the meaning. The definition is very specific and applies only to

a small percentage of people who are considered disabled.

Distinctions without differences? No, they are distinctions that divide journalists from the people we serve. They are the distinctions that continue to polarise our society.

As we head into the 21st Century, we are left with a great responsibility to make sure the polarisation does not continue and widen simply because we were too busy, too lazy or too indifferent to look up a few words in the dictionary.

A few additional tips:

★ Be careful when using adjectives and adverbs. These words are descriptors which can and do perpetuate stereotypes. Journalists are reporters and not describers. We provide the readers, listeners and viewers with the facts so that they can come to their own conclusions about the appropriate descriptors to use in the situation. Our function is not to tell the community what they should believe. Our function is to provide the community with the unbiased facts that will allow each member of our community to make decisions about how they will live their lives and participate in the benefits and burdens of membership in our communities.

★ Be vigilant to avoid loaded terms or phrases that will create a sense of disenfranchisement from those who are members of the groups most affected.

Do we describe a source as a swarthy, dark figure in attempt to create a tone and not realise that the tone we create is stereotypical? We must think about the average reader, listener and viewer with every word and phrase we choose. Are we communicating what we intended? Are we reinforcing stereotypes of specific groups without intending or even realising it?

Our words have the power to encourage members of our communities — one person at a time — to read our newspapers, listen and watch our broadcasts and believe the information we provide each day. When we use loaded phrases, clichés and

jargon we risk losing any trust that has been developed between the community and the media.

The words we choose can perpetuate community perceptions that the media are still as biased toward certain segments of society as the newspapers, radio and television organisation of previous generations, or previous political regimes. Our words when read or heard recreate the experiences of earlier times — times when social, political, economic and legal dynamics created pockets of hatred, fear, division and conflict. With each recreation we move further back into the historical context rather than allowing our communities to move forward toward becoming societies that value the freedom of expression and diverse opinion upon which democratic media depend.

Define what is a stereotype. Ask participants to discuss the stereotypes that exist for their ethnic, racial or religious group which they identify with. Ask the participants to communicate how they feel when they see a stereotype that is related to their racial or ethnic group in a newspaper article or radio or television news report.

Note to leader:

Use samples from the newspapers provided by seminar participants to discuss the use of language in the quest for diversity. How could the language in these stories have been changed to avoid or eliminate the stereotypes?

The following points should be made:

★ Avoid words or phrases that do not present a clear picture.

Example: In a nation where religious freedom is being re-established, a description of minority religious organisations such as the Jehovah's Witnesses, Baptists and Protestants as sects is both inaccurate and creates a fuzzy picture for the community of what is the dynamic between the "mainstream organisations", i.e. Catholics, Muslims and Orthodox organisations.

Note to leader:

The seminar leader should at this point request that someone in the group read the definition of the word "sect" and a discussion should follow regarding why this word would have a negative impact for those members of the religious groups which were lumped into that category.

★ Avoid descriptions of people that tend to prove or disprove a stereotype.

★ Use words that accurately describe older people, without being patronizing or demeaning.

★ Avoid using words that stereotype older people. Examples: feeble, decrepit, crippled.

★ Avoid descriptions of women based upon who they are married to. Women in our stories must be allowed to stand alone. Do not identify them as the wives of men but rather provide them with their own identity.

★ Avoid geographic or historical inaccuracy in language.

★ Use specifics and avoid labels. Example: In a crime story the suspect is described as a dark skinned male between 20 and 30 years of age. Press for more detail from the police. What was he wearing; where was he seen escaping; what did his hair look like?

The authorities will not provide specifics unless the journalist asks the questions. And our specific questions assist in providing the community with an adequate description of a suspect rather than a generic description that could be used to describe 50 percent of the population of a certain ethnic or racial group. And what if there are no specifics? Consider whether the description serves any purpose if it will not assist the authorities in apprehending a criminal.

Module 5: QUESTIONS REGARDING ETHNICITY

The following questions and answers are presented for your use in the discussion with the group. Focus the discussion around specific examples from the experiences of the participants. The answers provided below are to be considered a beginning and not the end. Allow the participants enough time to debate whether ethnic or racial identification was appropriate in the stories you are using as examples. The participants will raise issues that the leader must be prepared to actively engage, question or develop as they are made in order to assist the entire group to have a meaningful discussion. At the end of the discussion, the seminar leader should recap the conclusions of the group.

The notes from these sessions should be preserved to continue to expand on the questions and answers on the issue of ethnicity and reporting in the region.

Note to leader:

Crime stories are often the best to use as the basis for discussion of ethnicity and reporting. These may be the easiest examples to find in participant newspapers.

Question: When is race or ethnicity relevant?

Answer: Generally, race or ethnicity are not relevant in a story unless ethnicity is the factor that is at the core of the story. In stories involving politics, social action or social conditions, ethnicity is not automatically relevant. Writers should be careful not to let their word choices let the reader infer that ethnicity is an issue.

Example: In large cities, one ethnic group may own particular kinds of small stores or business establishments. Those stores often become targets of vandalism and hatred on the part of other groups.

Even so, in reporting a specific vandalism, a reporter should not assume that it is ethnically motivated. At first blush, ethnicity may be key. However, a closer look and good sourcing in the neighbourhood may indicate other causes of the violence, including interpersonal relationships among people who reside in a particular neighbourhood. Under these circumstances, ethnicity is a minor factor and reporting should not lead the reader to believe that members of a different group are out to destroy or harm members of another group.

Note to leader:

Ask the group to discuss how they can determine whether race is central here or is a case of the haves versus the have-nots? Or is it simply a criminal element run amok? How can the story accurately reflect the situation? Ask, would this person be identified by ethnicity if he or she were of the majority group? If the answer is no there should be a serious consideration of whether ethnicity is relevant to the story.

The seminar leader should find examples of the identification of persons by their ethnic group which leads to a conclusion that the story is about an ethnic or racial situation.

Question: Who decides whether there is a racial or ethnic angle?

Answer: Journalists should not assume the burden of deciding whether an incident has ethnic or racial overtones. The facts of the story should speak for themselves. Often a government source will tell the journalist that race or ethnicity are elements of the story. Official statements can be tested by talking with representatives from the communities involved. Develop sources across racial and ethnic lines and at least there will always be

multiple points of view on this question in your story if officials maintain that an incident or an issue has a racial or ethnic angle. Challenge the same officials with questions that probe “why?” they have determined there is an ethnic issue at play.

Example: Police label gang warfare as ethnic warfare. Once the reporter asks why, she finds the police have concluded that the warfare is ethnic because one gang is from one ethnic group and another gang is from another ethnic group. But in fact, the warfare was triggered by a turf war over lucrative illegal drug trade on the streets of your city. The war had to do with territory based on economics vs. ethnic strife. Might there be an ethnic element in this story? Possibly. However, it is not necessarily the most important reason for the conflict and therefore caution should be used in determining what importance the reporter will ascribe to ethnic issues in his story.

Question: What should people be called?

Answer: One way to deal with this issue is to ask the source — the person you are quoting or referring to — how he or she prefers to be described and that can be accomplished by simply asking. However, it is the general rule that only where ethnicity of a source is relevant to the subject of the story should it be used in the story.

Remember, a picture tells more than a thousand

words. Often the ethnic identity of sources can be communicated effectively through the use of pictures in newspapers and television. Where possible, why not show your source as the real person he or she is instead of indirectly characterising her?

Note to leader:

Descriptions of the source should be as specific as possible. Simply stating that someone is from Asia does not provide any relevant information about the person once the racial identity is determined relevant. Be specific. Generalisations promote stereotyping. Good journalism is specific about everything — ethnicity included. What country in Asia is the person from?

Question: What about immigrants?

Answer: The same rule applies. Avoid lumping all immigrants into classes. For example: Africans, Asians. The reader or viewer receives more information if you provide specific details about where the person is from. A person from America could be from Canada, the United States or Latin America. The reader learns nothing when we say that the person in the story is from Asia; more important to the story is the country that the person is from. Tell the reader the nation, state or the city where relevant. Africa is a large continent. Tell the reader what nation the person is from. The critical rule: Provide the reader or viewer with specific information.

Module 6: DEVELOPING SOURCES

Goal:

To assist programme participants in developing new and diverse sources.

Principle:

Diversity in sources in news stories will by its nature create a more diverse news report.

Changing the way we find and use sources in our news reporting is a task that requires a great deal of conscious action on the part of a reporter. Each reporter who is interested in creating more voices in his or her stories must begin developing the bank of sources with each contact made within the community. Casual meetings of people can provide opportunities to meet that doctor or lawyer who may be able to provide a different perspective to a routine story. Casual meetings may provide an opportunity to add the names and numbers of academics who are respected and may be from different ethnic groups. Every contact with an interesting person becomes an opportunity to expand your source list beyond the government sources that have been the mainstay of news reporters for decades. The best reporters have the most extensive network of diverse sources.

Note to leader:

Choose four stories from the participants' examples or from your reading or viewing that can be used to discuss expanding the base of sources for news stories. Ask the participants to read each story and break into small groups. Ask the participants to rate the stories for their diversity of sources or voices. Are the only people quoted men? Are the only people quoted members of the

government? Are the only people quoted from the majority group even though there may be other perspectives on the issue from other racial or ethnic groups?

To ponder:

★ Beware of unbalanced stories that appear.

Minority issues don't require comment from the majority; Jewish issues don't require comment from anti-Semites. Nor do gay and lesbian issues require comment from homophobic elements. The mechanical "balancing" of sources actually can open the door to biased reporting by increasing the opportunity to use stereotypes, clichés and prejudiced voices.

★ Be careful when describing living arrangements between adults.

In many countries it is not relevant that a man and woman do not have a marriage certificate or that two men or two women are a couple and live together. If it must be mentioned, do not moralise or use coy, cute labels. Many journalists use "companion" or "close friend" to describe these long-term relationships or living arrangements. The key: don't assume; ask the subject of the story how he or she would characterise the relationship.

Note to leader:

Review the stories again. Ask each participant to make a list of other categories of people who could be contacted to add perspective to the story. Complete the same exercise with the remaining three stories. Ask the participants to discuss how they would identify sources to expand the perspectives in the stories.

Module 7: IMAGES

One of the first places that journalists can provide an opportunity for members of all racial, ethnic and religious groups to identify with the content of the newspaper, magazine, or television broadcasts is through the use of pictures. **Note to leader:** Ask the seminar participants what kinds of pictures of minorities — if any — are included in the newspaper or television news broadcasts. Do minorities serve as news anchors as well as field reporters? Are women pictured in stories where women can be used as the image for the story, or is the news photography or video predominantly male? The seminar leader should pull examples from the newspaper and video samples provided by the participants or examples that the leader has found and feels would be excellent to illustrate the lack of diversity in the news images we project.

★ As you show the examples to the group, ask them to brainstorm other ways the stories could have been illustrated with an eye to diversity rather than simply using the same male government sources and showing their photos or video clips.

★ Ask the participants to review stories and artwork that accompany crime stories. Crime stories are frequently more graphic. Also find video or still photographs of news broadcasts from war zones or zones of civil unrest. Do these pictures and videos provide a slanted view of the unrest or fighting? Are the video images, particularly, used to provide a point of view? Is this or should this be the journalist's goal? How can presenting a point of view be avoided in stories that have a strong political or historical context that has traditionally excluded all views but the government's view?

Pictures — both still and video — must reflect the news. But there are no rules as to who must be included in the pictures to reflect the news. Except

for the breaking news events, the spot news stories, there are often choices.

Note to leader:

Review the newspapers and video provided by the participants and go over the pictures that are available. Discuss whether there were other opportunities to provide a more diverse picture of the event than was used by the newspaper or television station? Discuss the stories that are chosen from the video clips provided. Might there have been other opportunities to illustrate the story that would have provided a more diverse view of events?

When there is a major event, photographers can look for opportunities to capture the diversity of the crowds rather than focusing the lens eye on those who represent the sameness of the majority.

Example: In a recent election story, the photographer photographed a voting place with a woman monitoring the polls and a woman voting. The photographer knew that this scene in a male-dominated society would not have been recorded in the past. The photographer's picture signals a new day. The photographer probably could have gone to another polling place or could have shot a similar picture with men and walked away. The photographer in this case captured change, and readers or viewers will be affected in some way by the change represented in the image. Consciously or unconsciously, the reader or viewer will begin to sense a shift in the community and in the role of women in that community.

Note to leader:

Again, look for examples of pictures that provide a sense of subtle change within the community. Are there any in the newspapers or broadcast materials provided before the seminar? Are there any pictures that the seminar participants would question

could have been taken with others creating diversity without changing the news event?

One of the goals in examining images for diversity is to make it possible for some of our readers and viewers to say: “Thanks for letting me see myself in your newspaper or television broadcast. Thanks for letting me be a part of this community as you, the news media, define our community through the news you report each day.”

Note to leader:

At this point, the seminar leader should stress that the images used are a matter of choice by the persons within the news media who are making the decisions about what images should be printed or prepared for broadcast.

How must the decision-making change if there is to be an increase in diverse images in the newspaper or in the television news broadcasts? Go back and look at some of the footage and newspaper photographs reviewed earlier in this module. Where are the other choices that could have been made? When should that choice have been made, and who makes the choices? The leader should engage the group in discussion about viewing the scene of a story and making the choices at the point that the artwork is being planned and shot by the photographer/reporter or camera person.

Diversity in the art work used by the news media also includes the decision making when one picture is chosen over another for a story. Each person responsible for taking and choosing art should begin to ask what is the best way to illustrate this story while drawing in as many readers as possible.

Note to leader:

Choose two or three stories without pictures from local or national newspapers that would lend themselves to a brainstorming session about the kind of art-work that best illustrates the story while keeping the diversity principles in mind. Write down the suggestions for each story on large sheets of paper that should be visible to the participants. Once the process has been completed, sug-

gest to the participants that they use the process for stories in which they are responsible for the artwork. How would each participant include such a process as part of their news organisation?

Editorial Commentary: Cartoons

Editorial cartoons pose a special challenge. Editorial cartoons are meant to be irreverent and, at times, to present the extremes of political views or social discordance. These cartoons often trade heavily on stereotypes of minority groups.

But editorial cartoons, though in a different league, are not immune from evaluation, particularly when the cartoons tend to perpetuate stereotypes that divide the community or reinforce hatred and distrust. The remedy here is the constant debate and vigilance of journalists and news organisations.

Find samples of editorial cartoons and make copies available to the participants. Ask whether there is anything in any of the cartoons that would be offensive to the participants; to someone from another racial, ethnic or religious group? The final question: Do the participants believe that the offensiveness — even the threat of offence — was a “price worth paying” for the message that was conveyed by the cartoon? Use the participants’ response as a benchmark for determining whether editorial commentary in the form of cartoons is so offensive as to be threatening to any segment of the population.

Note to leader:

Begin a discussion regarding the difference between the editorial cartoon and the news photography that accompanies news stories in print or on television. What are the different standards applied to both? Does the public understand that difference? What would be the participants’ view of what should be done if an offensive cartoon were printed? What if there was a complaint from the community? What if everyone knew it was offensive and there were no complaints? Would the fact that there were no complaints be a sign of a problem between the community and the media, one which the media would have to work to overcome?

The individual action plan

The Individual Action Plan is the key to helping journalists take home with them what they have been discussing, analysing, and learning about during this programme. It is a device to encourage the participants to commit actively to changing what they do every day as professionals. Moreover, because journalists can commit not only to individual acts, but to working with their colleagues, news organisations, and professional associations and unions, the Individual Action Plan (IAP) can also be a mechanism to influence other individuals and institutions as well.

The leader should adapt the IAP form printed below, adding or replacing the questions here, and distribute the IAP at the beginning of the workshop or seminar so that each participant has this outcome in mind throughout the programme. The IAP should be discussed by the group before it is filled in by individuals, and the leader should encourage each participant to be as specific as possible about the goals he or she is setting, the means to be employed, and the timetable to be followed. It is suggested that a six-month time frame be used for the IAP, but this is at the discretion of the leader and the group, which should revise the IAP form until group members become comfortable with the commitments it asks them to make. After the IAPs are filled in at the last session, the leader should suggest that each participant share his or her Action Plan with the group.

The leader should make notes on each one to assist in the follow-up discussed below. Ideally, there will be follow-up by the leader at the agreed-upon IAP deadline. Because the commitment to journalism that is sensitive to diversity issues is often personally and institutionally difficult, this follow-up timetable provides an opportunity to review the material covered in the original discussions, encourage further discussion, and reinforce the original diversity goals. In the best circumstances, such follow-up will be institutionalised in the form of follow-on workshops, publications, and other forms of on-the-job training and support.

Remember the mission: To strengthen the credibility and value of newspaper, radio and tele-

vision news coverage as vehicles for community understanding and tolerance.

Remember the key objectives:

- ★ Increase diversity of voices and images in all news coverage
- ★ Strengthen connections with readers, listeners, viewers and potential readers, listeners and viewers
- ★ Expand readership, or the listening and viewing audience, to a greater segment of the community
- ★ Foster team work and communication within your news organisation.

The individual action plan is one of the most important steps in beginning to meet the challenge of applying what you have explored during this programme. Each participant should take home a concrete plan of action that you will use as you return to your daily duties as a journalist.

Please take a minute and consider the ways that you can concretely begin to work toward increasing the diversity of voices and images in your work, eliminating stereotypes, employing language carefully and, in general, being sensitive to the diversity issues you have discussed during this programme.

Next, write a short description of the actions you will take to meet some of the objectives established at the outset of this programme. Consider your plan a six-month plan; at each six-month interval you will review your progress, add another goal as you continue to move toward creating news media that values and encourage community understanding and tolerance. Action Plans are affirmative statements that focus on a specific task that you believe you will be interested in committing to once the programme ends. The Action Plan should be considered your personal plan to work toward achieving some of what is described in the mission statement above. It is important to set goals that

you know you will be able to attain and sustain for six months or more.

A few examples follow. Use additional space to expand or change the models or to develop an action statement that will work for you.

1) I will discuss the principles of diversity with another journalist where I work and share the materials developed during the training. I will do this by...

2) I will use language more precisely and monitor my work to eliminate slurs, clichés and other loaded terms that may be or are offensive to one group or another. I will do this by...

3) I will share my successful strategies for a more precise use of language with other journalists. I will do this by...

4) I will organise a training session for other staff members to discuss the principles of diversity as they apply to...

5) I will monitor the images presented in our newspaper or television broadcasts and make suggestions or plan my news gathering to provide opportunities for diverse images—women, the elderly, people of different racial, ethnic or religious backgrounds — in my news reports. I will begin by...

Note:

The suggestions are just samples of possible action plans. Draft your own statements using the suggestions above as models. Be concrete. Be specific. Be realistic. No matter how simple, remember that if each of us takes a step to increasing the diversity of voices within our news media we come closer to creating a vehicle for community understanding and tolerance over time.

14. Glossary

Glossary

AGEISM	Prejudice or discrimination based on someone's age or on stereotypes about older people.
ANTI-SEMITISM	Prejudice or discrimination against Jews based on negative ideas about their religious practices and beliefs or on ethnic stereotypes.
BIGOTRY	An obstinate and unreasoning attachment to one's own opinions, way of life and belief system, with narrow-minded intolerance of or prejudice against opposing perspectives and those who espouse them.
CLASSISM	Prejudice or discrimination based on socio-economic class.
DISABILITY	A physical or mental impairment that hinders or prevents someone from performing certain activities or negatively impacts intellectual functioning.
DISCRIMINATION	The denial of justice and fair treatment to members of other cultures, ethnic communities and social groups in a host of arenas, including employment, housing, political rights and public accommodations.
DIVERSITY	The presence, among both individuals and groups of people, of qualities and characteristics that differ from one another, whether these are primary dimensions that are not generally subject to personal choice (age, ethnicity, gender, sexual orientation, disability, etc.) or secondary dimensions that are (educational background, geographic location, marital status, religious beliefs, etc.).
EQUALITY	The condition of having or being accorded the same dignity, rank, or privileges as others.
ETHNOCENTRISM	The practice of consciously or unconsciously judging other ethnic groups by the values, standards and criteria of one's own and ignoring alternative perspectives or approaches.
HATE INCIDENT	An assault, harassment or some other aggressive and hostile act targeting the person or property of someone based on his or her race, religion, gender, sexual orientation or other group identity.

HETEROSEXISM	The practice of consciously or unconsciously viewing and treating homosexuality and bisexuality as inherently and unquestionably inferior to heterosexuality.
HOMOPHOBIA	A fear of or contempt for people who are, or who are thought to be, gays, lesbians and bisexuals.
MULTICULTURALISM	The practice of acknowledging and respecting the broad spectrum of cultures, religions, ethnic communities and other groups that coexist within a society.
PREJUDICE	An irrational suspicion or hatred of an entire category of people; an adverse judgement or opinion about others based solely or largely on their status as members of a specific ethnic, religious or other social group.
RACISM	Prejudice or discrimination based on the conviction that some ethnic groups are innately superior to others in intelligence, moral character, belief systems, way of life or other qualities.
SCAPEGOATING	The act of blaming an entire category of people, or individuals perceived as members of that group, for social, economic and other problems that in reality arise from complex and multiple sources.
SEXUAL ORIENTATION	The direction of a person's sexual interest toward members of the same, opposite, or both sexes.
STEREOTYPE	A broad generalisation about an entire group of people that ignores or overlooks the possibility of individual differences or variations.
TOLERANCE	An acceptance of and open-mindedness toward the practices, attitudes and beliefs of other cultures, ethnic communities and social groups.
XENOPHOBIA	A deep antipathy to, fear of, or contempt for foreigners or people from other cultures or ethnic groups

South East Europe Chapter of the Reporting Diversity Network

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Beta News Agency — Belgrade

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Independent Journalist Association of Serbia — Belgrade

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Stjepan Malović — Director

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Media Centar — Sarajevo
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Media Development Center — Sofia
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<http://www.mediacenterbg.org/>

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Roma Press Center — Budapest
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STINA News Agency — Split
Stojan Obradović — Director
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For contact details for any of the Reporting Diversity Network partners, please contact MDI.



About the Media Diversity Institute

The London-based Media Diversity Institute is a non-profit, non-partisan organisation which promotes conflict resolution through diversity reporting in developing societies. The institute's Reporting Diversity Network (RDN), brings together journalists, news organisations, media assistance centres, journalism schools and others in a collaborative effort to mobilise the power of the news media in support of a deeper public understanding of diversity, minority communities, inter-group conflict, and human rights. The RDN promotes the highest standards of professional journalism as they relate to coverage of minorities, diversity, and inter-ethnic relations, and develops the tools, training vehicles and practical reporting initiatives required to implement those standards.

Fair, accurate, sympathetic and in-depth reporting is vital in promoting understanding between different groups. The media has all too often been used as a weapon, promoting prejudice and discrimination. MDI aims to change that and turn media into a tool for strengthening human rights and democracy.

We do this primarily through education, training and co-operation with:

- ★ practicing journalists;
- ★ journalism professors and academics;
- ★ media owners and decision-makers;
- ★ media, human rights and minority organisations.

Our comprehensive approach, dealing with the issue of diversity from all angles, is the Institute's unique characteristic. We train journalists and media managers in best practice; we teach minority organisations how to communicate with the media; we work on strengthening minority media and we work with the journalism professors who will train future generations of journalists. MDI activities are divided into nine main areas:

1. diversity awareness training for journalists and media decision-makers;
2. practical diversity training and professional development for mid-career journalists;
3. diversity reporting news production initiatives, including team-reporting and news agency projects;
4. diversity curriculum development, in cooperation with journalism faculties;
5. media and public relations training for minority groups;
6. projects designed to promote reconciliation through the media;
7. production of diversity handbooks, resource manuals and training manuals;
8. post-conflict professional development for journalists, with a special emphasis on Post Trauma Stress Disorder (PTSD);
9. media monitoring of diversity-related issues.

Reporting Diversity Manual

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Publishers: Lydia El Khouri for the Media Diversity Institute and Dejan Ilić for Samizdat B92

Cover design: Leonard Vučinić

Layout: Samizdat

Printing: STANDARD 2