Journalist’s Guide for Reporting on Gender Responsive Implementation of Standards for Decent Work and Occupational Safety and Health

This toolkit was produced by the Association of Journalists of Kosovo in cooperation with UN Woman within the framework of the project “Promoting Decent Work through Strengthening of OSH Management and Social Dialogue in Kosovo,” which is implemented by UNOPS and funded by the Swedish International Development Cooperation Agency (Sida) through the Embassy of Sweden in Prishtina.
Decent work is recognized as a human right in itself. The right to decent work is recognized in the Universal Declaration of Human Rights, which contains several provisions relating not only to the “right to work” but also to various aspects of decent work. This includes fair and favorable working conditions, protection from unemployment, equal wages, social protection and the right to establish and attain membership in unions.

According to the International Labor Organization (ILO), decent work includes job opportunities that are productive and provide decent income, safety at the workplace and social protection for families, better prospects for personal development and social integration, freedom for people to express their concerns, to organize and participate in decisions that affect their lives and equal opportunities for all women and men.

Occupational safety and health (SHW) are key to full realization of workers’ rights. The ILO emphasizes that workers must be protected from diseases, injuries and violations arising from their employment. According to the World Health Organization (WHO), a healthy workplace is defined as one in which workers and employers work together in a continuous process of improvement to protect and promote the health, safety and well-being of all workers. Healthy workplaces should be open, accessible, and acceptable to people of different genders, backgrounds, demographics, and abilities.

However, for millions of workers the reality is more than different. The ILO and WHO have reported that almost 2 million people die each year with their death cause being interrelated to their occupation. These two fundamental world organizations in the field of occupational safety and health, in 2016 have published the first detailed and comprehensive world report on the nature of risks and diseases in the workplace. The largest causes of death were chronic obstructive pulmonary disease (450,000 deaths); stroke (400,000 deaths) and ischemic heart disease (350,000 deaths). Injuries at work were the cause of 19 percent of deaths (360,000 deaths).
The study considered 19 risk factors at work, including exposure to long working hours and to air pollution, asthmagens, carcinogens, ergonomic risk factors and noise. The main risk was exposure to long working hours - associated with about 750,000 deaths. Exposure to air pollution (particles, gases and fumes) in the workplace was responsible for 450,000 deaths.
Journalism for workers’ rights is journalism for human rights

From the industrial revolution, to manual labor professions, such as factory workers, to the new jobs created by the digital revolution, OSH has consistently been at the center of public interest and discussion. But alarming figures on the risk and number of deaths at work worldwide suggest the need for a greater global effort to address this issue.

ILO and WHO reports should be a wake-up call for newsrooms and journalists to insist on the greatest possible coverage of health and safety at work.

In fact, the global pandemic crisis has highlighted more than ever the safety and health of workers, as for millions of workers around the world things have gotten worse, especially in countries without significant and sustained government intervention.

The ILO has estimated that 14 million jobs were lost in 2020, which, in combination with reduced working hours, resulted in a loss of working hours approximately four times higher than during the 2009 financial crisis.
It has already been reported that among those who have been employed, many essential frontline workers, such as healthcare workers, grocery stores or distribution drivers, have been exposed to multiple risks by COVID-19.

For example, an ILO and WHO report assessed how healthcare workers in the pandemic context were at risk of contracting a virus during working hours, skin disorders, stress, psychological distress, chronic fatigue, stigma, and discrimination.

The global pandemic has also shown how inadequate protection in the workplace affects disproportionately individuals who are already affected by inequalities, such as marginalized ethnic groups and women. In the United States, for example, people of color and women comprise the largest number of low-wage first-line service workers, and healthcare jobs such as nursing and home healthcare.

Safety and health within and beyond the context of the pandemic are an inevitable part of the journalistic discussion not only within reporting on workers’ rights, but on human rights in general.

Human rights are still considered primarily political and civil rights, and reporting human rights abuses is particularly relevant to victims of political violence, and sometimes to freedom of expression, which is also a fundamental human right. The importance of economic, social and cultural rights continues to be largely ignored by the media in their coverage of economic issues, including the international economy, poverty, inequality and social and economic discrimination.

But OSH cannot be examined without a deeper analysis of the structural complexities and inequalities that affect the experiences that people have gone through; At the same time, we cannot talk about human and workers’ rights reporting without first examining the various forms and causes of how health and safety at work are endangered.
The first part of the guide is designed to help journalists understand key concepts on occupational safety and health, and to include a gender perspective when reporting on these topics. Journalists will gain insight into how women and men’s experiences at work differ, since so far only the risks to male workers, as key participants in the labor market, are largely known, often neglecting the risks to women.

However, the guide provides only an introduction and basic knowledge to OSH. If you want to understand more about this topic, then the OSH, ILO and WHO standards are very good sources.

The second part of the guide provides an overview of the legislation in Kosovo, which regulates OSH, as well as recommendations from UN Women to intervene in the identified legal gaps. It also includes a brief overview of trends in women’s participation in the workplace.

The third part of the guide covers the essential points of how to build OSH-related stories by integrating a gender perspective. Through examples and some key violations to keep in mind, this section explains the important steps towards reporting accurately and correctly, and how to use sources. This is not a comprehensive guide to journalism. There are numerous and more detailed guides elsewhere that address this issue.

The final section of the guide addresses key principles for gender-sensitive reporting, which help newsrooms incorporate a gender perspective and therefore make journalism more inclusive in all areas, including occupational safety and health.
A quick internet search on ethical and professional journalism shows that the comprehensiveness and diversity of voices and experiences turn out to be an emergency request to be addressed in the newsroom of various media.

The Poynter Institute, one of the world’s leading schools and research organizations for journalism, argues that journalism should be an important tool of democracy: an arbiter of truth, transparency and justice, and it will be thus only if it is diverse and inclusive. The Institute constantly emphasizes the need for training of journalists to make journalism more inclusive and cover the communities they serve.

Within the idea of inclusive journalism, scholars, academics, and professional journalists emphasize combating the problem of under-representation and exclusion of women - but also of ethnic and sexual minorities - creating only a halved reality over the world; after all, women make up half of the world’s population.

Therefore, in the context of journalistic coverage of occupational safety and health, it is imperative that newsrooms practice gender-responsive enforcement of standards for decent work and occupational safety and health. Initially, journalists and editors themselves need to have a more fundamental knowledge of how women and men have different stories at work, and how their safety and health are affected in different ways, often as a result of the traditional division of labor and strict norms.
Gender perspective in the context of occupational safety and health

The ILO emphasizes how recognizing diversity, including gender differences, is vital to enabling the safety and health of working men and women, and that gender differences must be taken into account in developing prevention policies and strategies within the OSH. According to the ILO, this approach recognizes and highlights the differences that exist between male and female employees in order to identify OSH risks and implement effective solutions.

The WHO also mentions in a 2011 guide for employers and workers’ representatives that building a fair and healthy workplace for all initially requires a gender perspective on various health problems and risks at work.

“For example, in their jobs in construction, mining and transportation, men are exposed to hazards such as falls, explosions, electric shocks, chemicals, noise, vibration, heat and solar radiation. In the European Union, 90% of individuals exposed to solar radiation at least 75% of their working time are men. On the other hand, in their jobs in manufacturing, education, retail, and health care, women are exposed to organizational risks such as monotony, high demands, and limited authority (which are associated with fatigue, depression, and unhealthy behaviors), biological and chemical hazards such as infections and solvents, and musculoskeletal and cardiovascular loads such as repetitive movements and difficult static and standing postures.

Solar radiation exposed to 90% of individuals in the European Union

At least 75% of their working time are men.
WHO highlights how women are particularly vulnerable to workplace violence because they are over-represented in jobs where they have to interact with students, clients and patients. The report provides an example of how in many parts of the world women also experience violence on the way to and from work, where one of the most notable cases is the murder of working women in Ciudad Juarez, Mexico.

Women and men experience different types of violence at work: across sectors, women are more likely to be victims of psychological, sexual and physical violence.

The report says that even when women and men perform exactly the same tasks, even in this case they may be exposed to different risks, when women enter professions that are traditionally perceived as male-dominated.

“Differences in body shape and dimensions between the sexes mean that work equipment and tools created for men’s bodies are often unsuitable for women.” For example, a study with women hotel cleaners has revealed how mobile food carts were designed for European men”, the report writes.

WHO also highlights how exposure at work can affect reproductive health in a variety of ways: sexual function, menstrual health, fertility (for women and men), pregnancy, breastfeeding, certain cancers (e.g. prostate, breast, cervix cancer), menopause and child development.
Rules for gender responsive implementation of standards for decent work and OSH

The ILO has developed a ten-rule guide that recommends how to integrate a gender perspective into the analysis, formulation and monitoring of policies, programs, and preventive measures to reduce inequalities between women and men in terms of occupational safety and health. These rules can help journalists have a better insight into how employers should try to incorporate a gender perspective into the implementation of OSH standards.

1. Implementing a gender perspective in the review and development of occupational safety and health legislation.
2. Implementing occupational safety and health policies to address gender inequalities in practice.
4. Research on occupational safety and health should take into account gender differences.
5. Development of gender sensitive occupational safety and health indicators based on gender disaggregated data.
6. Promoting equal access to occupational health services and care for all workers.
7. Ensuring the participation of male and female workers, and their representatives in occupational safety and health measures, health promotion and decision-making.
8. Developing data, education and training with a gender perspective on occupational safety and health.
9. Designing work equipment, tools and personal protective equipment for men and women.
10. Adjusting the balance between working hours and life.

Detailed explanations by the ILO for each point can be found here:

II The context in Kosovo

Legislation

In 2013, Kosovo adopted the Law on Occupational Safety and Health, which contains the general principles for the prevention of occupational hazards, elimination of risk factors and accidents, information, consultation, balanced participation in improving the level of safety and health at work, training of employees, their representatives and general guidelines for the implementation of these principles.

According to the Occupational Safety and Health Profile for Kosovo, an ILO report published this year, the Ministry of Labor and Social Welfare (MLSW) revised the Law on OSH in 2019 and prepared a concept paper identifying all necessary legislative amendment. These amendments were adopted by the government in 2020.

The report states that the following priority areas for improvement have been identified: increasing the accountability of employers; harmonizing risk assessment terminology to ensure a better understanding of the concept; establishing a system for recording, reporting, investigating and statistical data on accidents at work (in line with European Statistics on Accidents at Work), and broadening the scope of incidents at work to be investigated by an employer (including cases where the employee has been on the verge of experiencing an incident).

It was also assessed that it is necessary to increase the role of employee representatives to ensure their active communication and participation and to improve the protection of sensitive and vulnerable groups of workers, such as young workers, women, breastfeeding mothers, people with disabilities and the elderly.

The process of amending the Law on OSH began in 2020 and is expected to be finalized by December 2021.
The Labor Law, adopted in 2010, provides for the protection of employees’ rights. It covers legal requirements related to labor relations and employee protection. According to the ILO report, the law is not fully in line with all relevant EU directives. The new Labor Law is expected to include some EU directives in the areas of employment relationships, social protection, wages, working hours and modern employee protection.

Law on Gender Equality protects and promotes gender equality in political and public life, employment, education, health, economy and social benefits. This law prevents discrimination based on gender, marital or family status, pregnancy, childbirth, parenthood and any form of guardianship in the public or private sector.

Law on Protection from Discrimination defines even more broadly the equal approach of non-discrimination in employment, self-employment and employment in the profession, including terms of employment and selection criteria, regardless of activity at all levels of the professional hierarchy, including promotions.
The Law on Gender Equality and the Law on Protection from Discrimination constitute an important legal framework for the protection of women in the workplace. Moreover, recognizing sexual orientation and gender identity within both laws creates good legal protection - at least on paper - for gay, lesbian, and transgender men and women as well.

Since 1919, the ILO has developed a system of international labor standards aimed at promoting opportunities for women and men to obtain decent and productive work, in conditions of freedom, equality, security and dignity. International labor standards, comprising the ILO conventions and recommendations, are the main tools used by the ILO. Kosovo legislation reflects the key principles from several ILO conventions, such as the Occupational Safety and Health Convention, the Forty-Hour Week Convention, and the Promotional Framework for Occupational Safety and Health Convention.

The ILO Code of Practice on OSH provides guidance on a wide range of topics, including mining, construction, the use of chemicals, health surveillance, and the registration and reporting of accidents at work and occupational diseases.

The Constitution also sets out fundamental rights such as the prohibition of forced labor, and the fundamental rights to health care and social security, including insurance against unemployment, disease, and old age. The Constitution also uses explicit references to international human rights treaties including the UN Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Discrimination against Women, which also covers OSH requirements.

The Labor Law in Kosovo provides for specific requirements for hazardous working conditions and maternity leave. It prohibits pregnant and breastfeeding employees from working night shifts or doing work that is classified as detrimental to their health.

Article 49 of the Labor Law regulates maternity leave. In Kosovo, mothers are entitled to 12 months of maternity leave. During the first six months of maternity leave the law obliges the employer to compensate 70 percent of the basic salary. The next three months are paid from the general budget and the compensation is equal to 50 percent of the average salary in Kosovo. These rights can also be exercised by the father (or, in case of the death of the father, the guardian) if the mother dies or abandons the child, or if the mother agrees to transfer these rights to the father of the child. The father is also entitled to two days of paid maternity leave and two weeks of unpaid leave.
UN Women has compiled some recommendations on how to ensure better gender mainstreaming when reviewing laws. These recommendations are a result of gender analysis of OSH-related legislation and can serve journalists to understand the legal shortcomings within existing laws and regulations, and those that will undergo amendment.

1. It is recommended that the Law on Gender Equality and the Labor Law refer to each other for a step-by-step and better gender mainstreaming.

2. The measures of the National Development Strategy are indirectly related to the functioning of the labor system and as a result to decent working conditions, including VET, the development of Small and Medium Enterprises, access to funds, measures of social dialogue and infrastructure development. However, the aspects of gender equality are not explicit and clear, and therefore this strategy should ensure that it envisages gender analysis and integrates into action plans the objectives that plans to achieve in terms of gender equality.

3. The Draft Cross-sectoral Strategy for Occupational Safety and Health 2021-2026 and the Action Plan 2021-2023 provide detailed and up-to-date data on OSH. However, there is little gender-based data. Gender analysis should be mandatory when preparing the legal infrastructure.

4. All reforms in the Labor Inspectorate should include a clear approach to gender equality, due to the key role that the LI has in monitoring the implementation of OSH standards. The LI should have non-discriminatory powers - including gender equality - to assess occupational hazards, monitor and control the implementation of the Labor Law, and take action in case of discrimination in employment.

5. The objectives of the Law on Occupational Safety and Health related to the improvement and strengthening of the legal framework are structured in relation to the legal frameworks and in line with the European Union directives on OSH. Particular importance in this section should be given to the wider harmonization with EU laws and to ensure that key elements of the gender equality directives are included in the provisions of the OSH.

6. It is recommended that the provisions on night shifts and overtime work in the Labor Law are regulated and identify cases where restrictions apply to the safety and health of pregnant and breastfeeding women - it should be made clear when these legal provisions protect the interests of children so that the rights would be entitled to both parents who are employed and not only to women.
Women in the labor market

Only 14.4% of women and 46.2% of men are employed in Kosovo. 21.5% of women are active in the labor market, i.e. employed or unemployed and looking for a job, compared to 58.9% of men.

According to the Independent Union of Private Sector Workers of Kosovo, 50% of workers in Kosovo are in the informal sector. Although accurate data is hard to find, women - working as tailors, house maids, hairdressers or seasonal agricultural workers - make up a large part of the informal workforce.

Although there are some survey-based estimates, there are no official statistics that reflect women's participation in the informal sector. According to a report of the Riinvest Institute, a thinktank in the field of socio-economic development, about 30% of women working in the private sector are without employment contracts.

Riinvest Institute surveys show that women in the private sector work longer than those in the public sector, often more than 10 hours a day. They also get paid less, work during weekends and public holidays, and are irregularly paid. Furthermore, according to Riinvest, approximately 75% of these women are never paid for overtime work even though they are legally entitled to it.

Women who work 10 to 12 hours are employed as saleswomen, hairdressers, tailors, cooks, cleaning assistants, pharmacists or accountants. The same goes for working days; women with these professions seem to have a 7-day work week.

The working conditions of women, both domestic and professional, have deteriorated dramatically since the pandemic broke out. Many women are facing unpaid extra work at home, while professional work as a caretaker, housekeeper, tailor or hairdresser has been severely hampered by the pandemic. Many employers for some time have reduced wages and hours in these industries, while the relief of restrictive measures increased the exposure of these workers to coronavirus.

A report by UN Women last year analyzed the effects of the Covid-19 outbreak in Europe and Central Asia and found that over 40% of women engaged in low income jobs during the outbreak. The most affected were women from Kosovo. A report by Democracy for Development (D4D), an organization focused on research and policy analysis, found that in Kosovo 5.3% of women and 2.6% of men had their contracts terminated as a result of the pandemic and 26% of women were sent on unpaid leave.
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III How to Report? 
From Field to Stories – How to Build a Media Report?

Identifying Stories

At a time of economic inequality that has aggravated even more as a result of the pandemic, journalism that focuses on health and safety at work, and workers’ rights in general, allows us to see the faces behind dry statistics. Furthermore, living and documenting the experiences of women and men workers in their workplace contributes to public social discussion, and increases the likelihood that workers’ rights will become part of the political agenda.

On the other hand, including the gender perspective in reporting fights the normalization of strict gender roles in the workplace and opens new discussion perspectives on gender issues which are mainly limited within organizations of women rights and feminist activism.
Some of the topics directly related to women's health and safety at work include maternity leave, breastfeeding, and sexual harassment in the workplace. Each of these issues illustrates how women’s safety and health at work remain untackled, as they are denied the right to decent work, and equal treatment.

"...Meanwhile, women who work and use their right to maternity leave are under constant pressure of losing their jobs.

Saranda, a new mother living in Prishtina, is currently on her maternity leave. She will return to her work before the six-month period of maternity leave, as her contract will expire and she is afraid she risks the renewal of her contract if she stays on leave for longer. Another private sector worker, Samira, gave birth to her child four months ago. She has been working in the same company for the last three years, but she has not gotten get paid maternity leave from her employer so far...."
Every study and report for over a decade speaks of how the current provisions on maternity law widen the gap in women's participation in the labour market, as the first six months of the leave are an obligation for employers.

As the Labour Law is yet to be finalized, including the provisions on maternity leave, journalists should continuously monitor and follow the finalization of the draft law.

Journalists should continuously conduct research on the most progressive provisions put forth by feminist NGOs and activists to create a more realistic perception of how the amendments proposed in the new draft law fit within the gender equality concept.

Organizations dealing with women rights issues and economic policies have been advocating for years to push forward a model to include paternity leave and parental permit in the family leave provisions. This model would provide equal opportunities to fathers and mothers to engage in child care together.

The current Labour Law, providing limited rights to fathers – fathers are entitled to only two days of paid leave on the occasion of child birth or child adoption – reinforces gender roles by ignoring the crucial role fathers have in child raising. Furthermore, such provisions reinforce the conviction that house chores and child care are women's responsibilities.

The current draft Labor Law should include journalists’ reporting, as one of the most important topics of women's rights and equality. According to reports produced over the years, the provisions of the new draft law have not yet responded to the requests of activists and NGOs.

**Where to begin:**

The starting point of articles and studies focusing on maternity leave, as usually occurs in journalism, are their characters and experiences.

Stories of facing sexist language and questions such as “Are you thinking of bearing children soon?” and “Are you pregnant?” during job interviews that we often hear as anecdotes from many women and girls may be a starting point of a long research study on maternity leave and gender discrimination.

Summarizing contract termination stories that coincide with the time of (post) birth, which are not rarely encountered, can lead to a large sample that can turn into a great research story.

Fathers who wanted to spend more time with their newborn babies and get unpaid leave but were not allowed due to legal provisions would also be significant sources. Their stories would contribute to the idea that exclusive maternal participation in childcare is just a social construct and a detrimental reinforcer of gender roles.

The Association of Independent Kosovo Trade Unions is also a good source for research as it constantly collects complaints of violations from workers. Organizations such as the Kosovo Women’s Network (KWN), D4D, the Kosovar Gender Studies Center (KCGS) and Riinvest are NGOs that have advocated for years against gender discrimination in the labor market and the amendment of the Labor Law to include paternity and family leave. The activists of these organizations, and the reports and statistics published over the years constitute vital sources and materials to investigate and build the story.
MLSW is the institution that initiated the amendment and supplementation of the Labor Law and is responsible for finalizing the amendments. This ministry and the Labor Inspectorate are also some of the key and most relevant institutions that have an obligation for occupational safety and health, and serve as an address for journalists covering occupational safety and health.

**Breastfeeding**

The Law on the Protection of Breastfeeding, adopted in 2015, ensures that breastfeeding workers are entitled to paid leave of two hours per day during their working hours from the sixth month to one year, not including regular rest during working hours, to breastfeed the baby. On the other hand, every breastfeeding employee is entitled to one hour paid leave during their working hours after the first year up to two years.

UNICEF continuously advocates that employers should support breastfeeding to ensure the health of mothers and children. Paid breaks dedicated solely to breastfeeding and creating a comfortable environment for breastfeeding within the office premises are some of the inexpensive interventions advocated by UNICEF that can help the well-being of employees and their babies.

While the topic of maternity leave has, however, been reported on, breastfeeding remained underreported in the media and there has rarely been any news on, for example, the implementation of the Law on the Protection of Breastfeeding. If we do an internet research, we get some news published a few months after the adoption of the law in 2015, informing about how the Labor Inspectorate has not received any complaints from any woman claiming that the employer is denying her the right to breastfeed. The news of that time suggests that one reason why the Inspectorate did not receive any complaints was that the law was not adequately promoted, and many women did not even know it existed.

In fact, realizing the right to breastfeed in the workplace and paid daily leave would still be an important topic today within the safety and health of women at work. Breastfeeding is specifically one of those topics that are not at the center of daily reporting, among major developments, and thus not even in the eyes of journalists.

Coverage of such topics often lies in the very nature of journalism, where the pursuit of truth is subjected to specific deadlines and rapid daily reporting, without an in-depth exploration. This shows that journalists must take the initiative to precede research even when they are not at the center of public debate. Such a thing is more likely to happen when the gender perspective is already an editorial policy. In addition, deeper knowledge and reflections on the notions of occupational safety and health certainly help editorial initiatives to explore a topic like breastfeeding women workers.
Sources

• People in the frontline — workers

From tailors exposed to chronic fatigue and back problems, victims of sexual harassment, unskilled workers to workers suffering from anxiety due to inability to adapt to the pandemic context – each and every worker has a story to tell, and waits for it to turn into news or research.

It is often these stories of violations and discrimination that constitute the starting point of – bottom up – research, which gradually explores how the whole institutional chain has failed to protect workers.

Aidan White, founder of the Ethical Journalism Network, explains how in order to become an ethical journalist, journalists must be as transparent as possible in their relationship with the sources. People may not fully understand the dangers they put themselves and others in when they are exposed to the public eye. This is especially true for people who have been through humanitarian disasters, wars, or other traumatic events.

But even on topics like occupational safety and health, journalists need to assess the vulnerability of resources as well as their value as information providers. They should explain their journalism process, and why they are covering specific stories, and they should not, except in the most exceptional circumstances, use deception in their relationships with sources.

White lists the following questions for journalists to ask themselves about their sources:

• Have I explained the grounds of our relationship to my source, and have I been completely transparent about my intentions?

• Was I careful to protect my source — for instance, if it is a young person or someone in vulnerable circumstances – to make sure they are aware of the potential consequences of publishing the information they provide?

Example: A woman wants to publicly talk about a sexual assault she suffered from her employer.

As sexual harassments and assaults are in most cases accompanied by post-traumatic stress, the journalist should inform the source that public appearance and identification may put him/her at the center of interest from other media, and may thus face numerous requests and pressure for interviews that can be very tedious and bring back trauma.

If the person accused of sexual assault is known to the public, then the risk will be even greater that her name will be part of various portals prone to sensation, where her integrity will not necessarily be treated with care and journalistic ethics. The content of the articles can tell the story only partially, and may even employ a judgmental and stigmatizing attitude. It should
also be explained to them that not the whole public will support them, but moreover, they may become the target of hate speech.

In the rules for ethical journalism, White recommends that journalists ask themselves the following questions:

- Am I sure the source completely understands the terms of our interview, and what I mean by publication, that are not to be quoted, or that the conversation is completely informal?
- Have I done everything I can to protect the sources' identity, and do I know the laws well enough to use this right?

Don’t get too close with the source

Sometimes journalists make the mistake of getting too close with their source. They sometimes create comfortable relationships that are vague and can easily undermine the ethical grounds of their work. Powerful sources, in particular, have their own agendas, and accepting what they say without questioning it crosses the ethical boundary and compromises editorial independence.

Anonymous sources

In the anonymous sources section, White claims that their anonymity is a right that should be entitled to those who need it, and should never be routinely given to anyone who asks for it. People who may lose their jobs due to whistleblowing, young children, or women who are victims of violence and abuse and others who are vulnerable to and unprotected by exposure are obviously entitled to it, but anonymity is not a privilege to be enjoyed by people who personally benefit through the confidentiality of their identity.

Journalists need to analyze what the potential motivation for seeking anonymity is, and whether that motivation potentially jeopardizes the journalists themselves and the media they work for.

For example, in the above paragraph on maternity leave, it is reasonable for the interviewees to speak anonymously as they fear that their job will be jeopardized. It is important that journalists always try to find a source who speaks publicly, as anonymity can threaten the credibility and veracity of the story.

On topics about worker safety and protection, women and men who no longer work in that workplace but who have similar history of violations to current workers may feel more comfortable speaking in public. Their confessions are also essential to document a pattern of violations in a given place, and to make a genuine investigative article.

When sources are reluctant to talk

When investigating various workplace violations, sources are often reluctant to make statements that would assist the journalist in the investigative process. However, sometimes journalists should try to have informal conversations where the sources are not quoted, which could help the journalist understand more about the topic they are investigating.

If people strongly object to talking, then journalists should ask them if they can refer to other sources that can talk and are vital to the progress of the research.

In its book called “Digging Deeper”, a guide for investigative journalists in the Balkans, BIRN advises that reluctant sources can often be accessed through references and intermediaries.
friends, colleagues, other sources, who can guarantee the journalist’s credibility and help reluctant interviewees to talk.

BIRN explains that, in the Balkan society, people still prefer a personal approach, and trust a journalist more easily if they are referred by someone the source trusts or respects.

The book also highlights that reluctant sources are sometimes convinced to talk if they see the journalist has good intentions and is motivated not only by the publication of the article, but also by the need to shed light on the truth and do something for the common good.

Other courses:

- Union representatives
- Researchers, activists, NGOs
- Different groups and organizations promoting safety and health

Sexual harassment at work

“The day she started her first job in the field of engineering was a great achievement and a dream come true for Marigona (whose identity is known to the editorial).

She had to work in the office and in the field with many man colleagues, an area that lists very few women workers.

Very soon, this employee said she started feeling uncomfortable in her workplace due to the constant comments she received about her looks.

“One of the gravest events was when my colleague hit me jokingly, and then insisted on caressing that part of my body to ‘ease the
pain’,” she tells the Radio Evropa e Lirë. Marigona says that there were times when colleagues tried to touch or kiss her while greeting her at work.

“It is often attempt to justify it as being a compliment, but it makes you feel uncomfortable,” she says.

The twenty-two-year-old says that apart from raising the concern with the colleagues who harassed her, she could not report the cases anywhere else out of fear that they would embarrass and fire her. “As women, especially in this profession, we have to do a lot more than men to be equal to them. We have created a mindset of “getting over it” (the harassment) and keep doing your job,” Marigona says.”


The article where the above excerpt was taken deals with sexual harassment in the workplace. This form of gender-based violence and discrimination negatively affects the work environment, harms any attempt at gender equality at work, creates unfair employment practices, and negatively affects the dignity and well-being of workers. Lack of mechanisms to address sexual harassment in the workplace creates psychological anxiety and stress for the victims, and reinforces existing power relations.

The article was written a few days after the launch of an online campaign against sexual harassment in the workplace, initiated by KWN in partnership with the Agency for Gender Equality (AGE) and the Ombudsperson. The campaign was designed to inform citizens about the forms of sexual harassment in the workplace and the laws punishing it.

The data presented on the KWN website about the campaign provides ample information to start the story. The news of the launch of the campaign has the element of novelty and can be used to essentially elaborate one of the most important topics related to the safety of women and girls at work.

In the article of Evropa e Lirë, the news of the campaign is complemented by a personal account of a history of harassment and the voices of activists and trade unionists, who are often the victims’ first contact. Such reporting is a typical example when an organization's current activity becomes a critical story for the public interest within the framework of women's rights and workers' rights.

KWN also has research studies and publications that address sexual harassment and gender-based discrimination and employment in Kosovo. These provide an important basis for
journalists who want to investigate and tell stories about this form of violence.

The International Federation of Journalists (IFJ) has compiled some guidelines on how to report gender-based violence, which assist journalists in investigating and reporting on sexual harassment.
IFJ Recommendations:

1. Use accurate, non-judgemental language. Good journalists will strike a balance when deciding how much graphic detail to include. Too much may be sensationalist, while too little can weaken the victim's case. At all times, the language of reporting should avoid suggestions that the survivors may be to blame, or were otherwise responsible for the attack or acts of violence against them.

2. People who suffer from different forms of violence will not wish to be described as a ‘victim’ unless they use the word themselves. A term that more accurately describes the reality of a person who has suffered in this way is ‘survivor’.

3. Ensure that the interviewing place meets the needs of the interviewee. A female interviewer should be on hand and the setting must always be secure and private. Media must do everything they can to avoid exposing the interviewee to further abuse. This includes avoiding actions that undermine their quality of life or their standing in the community.

4. Treat the survivor with respect. For journalists this means respecting privacy, providing detailed and complete information about the topics to be covered in any interview, as well as how it will be reported. Survivors have the right to refuse to answer any questions or not to divulge more than they are comfortable with. Journalists should make themselves available for later contact; providing contact details to interviewee will ensure they are able to keep in contact if they wish or need to do so.

5. Use statistics or social background information to place the incident within the context. Readers and the media audience need to be informed of the bigger picture. The opinion of experts on violence against women will always increase the depth of understanding by providing relevant and useful information. This will also ensure that media never give the impression that violence against women has an inexplicable tragedy that cannot be solved.

6. Tell the whole story: sometimes media identify specific incidents and focus on the tragic aspects of it, but reporters do well to understand that abuse might be part of a long-standing social problem.

7. Maintain confidentiality: as part of their duty of care, media and journalists have an ethical responsibility not to publish or broadcast names or identify places that in any way might further compromise the safety of survivors or witnesses.

8. Use local resources: media should contact experts, women groups and organisations on the ground about proper interviewing techniques, and avoid situations – such as where it is unacceptable for male camera workers or reporters to enter a secluded place – which can cause embarrassment or hostility. Journalists should educate themselves on the specific cultural contexts and respect them.

9. Provide useful information: reports that include details of sources and the contact details of local support organizations and services will provide vital and helpful information for survivors/witnesses and their families and others who may be affected.
The media can play a transformative role in achieving gender equality in society by breaking gender stereotypes and challenging traditional social and cultural norms and attitudes regarding gender perceptions. To do this, the media needs to incorporate a gender perspective into editorial policies and provide trainings for editors and journalists on how to make gender-sensitive media coverage. Gender mainstreaming best guides journalists on how to report comprehensively on health and safety at work.

**Five basic principles in gender-sensitive reporting:**

- Balance the presence of women and men in media coverage to reflect human society, experiences, actions, perspectives and concerns.
- Avoid gender stereotypes that do not reflect the world and perpetuate a two-dimensional portrait of society.
- Weigh the representation of women and men, making sure you give women an equal voice, including as experts, in areas often dominated by men, such as politics and government, economics and business, war and conflict, science, technology, and sports.
- Use gender-sensitive language.
- Cover gender equality issues and discussions as an important and integral part of the media role as a watchdog of society.
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