PROTECTING THE RIGHTS OF CHILDREN: THE ROLE OF THE MEDIA
LESSONS FROM BRAZIL, INDIA AND KENYA

Internews
EUROPE

ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

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ABOUT INTERNEWS EUROPE

Internews Europe is an international development organisation that specialises in supporting independent media, freedom of information and free expression around the globe. The vast majority of our programmes are targeted at crisis-hit populations, emerging democracies and some of the world's poorest countries.

We believe access to information and resilient local media is central to good governance, human rights and conflict resolution, and is a key part of effective responses to humanitarian crises and public understanding of critical issues such as climate change. Internews Europe's media development and information access projects ultimately enable people to hold their governments to account, to develop tolerant and prosperous communities and to rebuild lives and livelihoods following destabilising conflict or humanitarian disasters.

The power of new technologies to analyse, distribute and publish data and information is creating significant opportunities to support our beneficiaries.

Our programmes increasingly amplify the reach and impact of local media through the innovative deployment of new digital technologies (Internet, mobile, and social media) to create dynamic and inclusive local information systems.

Every year our work empowers and builds the capacity of dozens of independent media organisations and hundreds of local media professionals in some of the world's most challenging environments.

We are creating a new generation of professionals that combine a solid grounding in sound, ethical journalism with skills in the new digital communication technologies to support local citizens and consumers.

ABOUT THE RESEARCH

This report is based on research conducted in Brazil, India and Kenya in 2013.

The aim of the research was to assess the current role played by the media in protecting and promoting child rights.

It forms the basis of a three-year programme to strengthen the media in reporting on children's rights, by addressing specifically the lack of child-led and high-quality information available to the media, citizens and policy-makers.

INTRODUCTION

National and international efforts are underway across all continents to stop systematic abuse of the rights of children. Even so, shockingly high levels of child rights violations continue. In three countries alone – India, Kenya and Brazil – hundreds of millions of children live with hunger, homelessness and illiteracy, and suffer sexual violence, physical abuse, forced labour and other varied and complex risks. The number of children at risk today in these countries is staggering – nearly 300 million children (over half the child population) are living in conditions where their basic rights are violated.[1]

To confront and reduce the persistently high rate of child rights violations, Internews Europe, with the assistance of the IKEA Foundation, has assessed how the power of media and communication can play a role in efforts to fundamentally and sustainably shift the protection of child rights, in India, Kenya and Brazil.

Internews Europe believes that high quality media content and public debate that is inclusive of child voices, expert advocates, and that explains policy issues, can contribute to wider efforts to improve the environment for protecting and promoting the rights of children.

During 2013, Internews Europe undertook intensive research to provide evidence to inform a long-term strategy to improve the way in which child rights are reported, debated, addressed and defended in different settings.

India, Kenya and Brazil were used as test settings to understand how to harness the power of traditional media (TV, newspapers and radio) and new media (Internet and mobile phones) to amplify the voices of advocates and children, improve media coverage and transform child protection. Local researchers in each country conducted extensive primary and secondary research to understand current media practices and how media intersect with youth and advocates' voices to form an 'information ecosystem' that can hinder or help child rights protection.

Additionally, an in-depth analysis of new and traditional media content in these countries was undertaken to understand the quality and quantity of coverage of child rights violations, and of related policy discussions.

This report presents an overview of the results of this research and analysis. It also presents a programme design concept – using the research as a foundation and framed within the context of the three test countries – that could radically improve the child rights scenario in these three countries, and be adopted for application more broadly.

The programme design concept is proposed in the final section of this paper (see 'The way forward: overall summary and recommendations'). It is an evidence-based approach to activities that involve all key actors: media, advocates and civil society, policy-makers and government, and children and youth.

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1 Research was undertaken in India, Kenya and Brazil during August 2013 to provide an indicative number of children at risk (children were defined as 0-12 years; youths were defined as 13-18 years). No nation-specific quantitative numbers were available. Instead, relevant data indicators were assembled by in-country research teams and a logical assessment of the total percent of children at risk was surmised. Research determined that more than half of the children in India, Kenya and Brazil confront complex and serious risk factors in relation to their basic rights and wellbeing. The aggregate number across all three countries is assessed to be: 279 million children at risk; disaggregated by country: India, 236.5 million; Kenya, 10.65 million; Brazil, 32 million.

KEY FINDINGS AND SUMMARY RECOMMENDATIONS

There is tremendous potential and need for media and communications to contribute to the protection of child rights.

However, the reality of achieving this is not so simple. As this report describes, a wide range of factors currently inhibit media in the three countries covered – India, Brazil and Kenya – from playing their full role in promoting awareness of child rights, as well as in helping children realise their rights and in holding government accountable. Crucial issues identified across the board in all three countries include:

Lack of children's voices: A patronising attitude towards children and youth severely limits the space that children get in the mainstream media, and all but excludes their voices from the public debate on child rights.

Lack of coverage: There is an absence of meaningful, realistic and socially relevant media coverage or information flows on child rights issues.

Lack of professionalism: Reporting on child rights and children's issues is not widely recognised as a specialised field, and this means not many journalists are motivated or even capable of producing in-depth coverage. This neglect starts right from journalism school and extends to almost all newsrooms.

Lack of media-CSO cooperation: Almost everywhere, Internews Europe has found a high level of mistrust between the media and child rights advocates. Both sides do not really understand each other's needs and expectations, and find it hard to work together constructively.

Lack of rules: Ethical guidelines on reporting child rights are little known and poorly implemented.

Because of these shortcomings, not enough crucial information is currently being shared between key stakeholders to bring about the positive dynamics and pressures envisioned in the theory of change, outlined in our opening chapter.
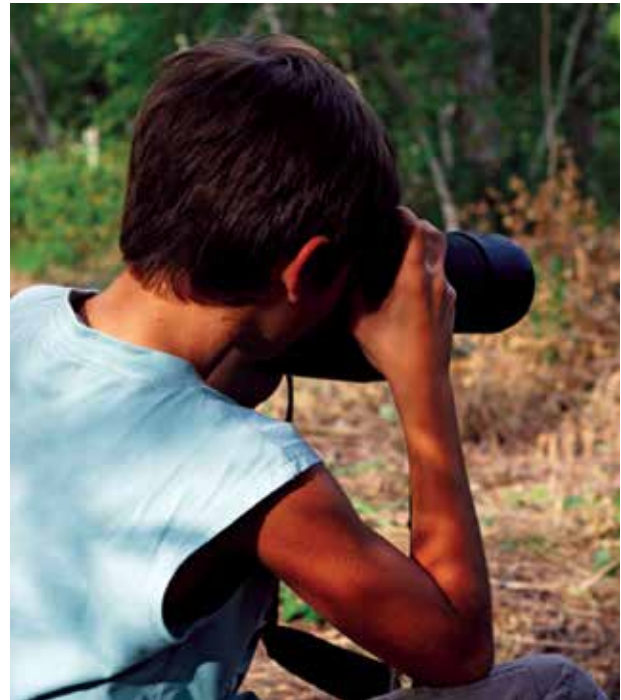
A young photographer. © AGENCE VEKHA / ISTOCK

SUMMARY RECOMMENDATIONS (SEE PAGE 72 FOR FULL RECOMMENDATIONS):

1. Create more youth journalists by training youth to produce radio programmes or run radio stations , and creating youth media bureaus/centres.

2. Establish incentives for journalists to specialise in child rights, including bespoke training, fellowships and awards for best reporting on child rights issues.

3. Improve CSO-media networking through workshops, networks, field visits and training.

4. Establish and monitor guidelines for reporting child rights.

Cards distributed to members of the Bal Mazdoor children's union in India, depicting police harassment of children. Maintained by an NGO called Butterflies, the union acts as a forum through which children can voice concerns and fight for their rights.
© STUART FREEDMAN / PANOS

INTERNEWS EUROPE'S THEORY OF CHANGE

The theory of change underlying our belief in the power of communication for protecting child rights (and the actions we suggest to achieve that goal) is this:

If *media, civil society and children and youth themselves are empowered to provide valid, credible and realistic information that is widely shared with and among citizens, educating people across a society on the rights of children as full and protected members based on international standards*

and *news and education information is also shared in this way on the real and continued violations of these rights and means of improved protection – integrating and enhancing the voices of civil society as advocates and children and youth as their own, best spokespersons*

then *a society will gain understanding of appropriate standards for treating and protecting its children, pressure will be brought to bear on governments to improve legal protection (both through codification of laws and the implementation of these laws) and individuals as parents, teachers, neighbours and children will internalise these norms and systems of protection and practice them in daily life, thus radically improving the protection of human rights of their children.*

RESEARCH METHODOLOGY

Internews Europe commissioned a series of three in-depth, in-country situation and sector analyses of the media and child rights landscape in Kenya, India and Brazil in 2013. In addition to this, a technical media content analysis study was conducted by Douglas Gould & Co,[2] which reviewed and analysed the information and news content of primary media outlets and social media content relevant to child rights.

A brief description of the research is presented below. More detailed results of the research are presented in the country-focused chapters that follow.

IN-COUNTRY SITUATION/SECTOR ANALYSIS

The **in-country situation/sector analysis** was primarily qualitative research that analysed existing secondary source material as well as qualitative information obtained from primary sources through interviews and focus group discussions. It looked into the broad media and civil society organisation (CSO) landscape and incorporated general assessments of news and information content across all media platforms, as well as child-focused media content and programming; the professional media sector's current engagement in child rights; and the activities of the CSO/advocacy sector linked to child rights. In addition to assembling, summarising and analysing data, this research also identified opportunities and provided recommendations for potentially relevant interventions that could enhance the use of media to communicate on child rights.

The in-country sector analyses were commissioned as a three-part research series, the findings of which are presented in this paper within each of the three country chapters.

METHODOLOGY

Part I, **The media and child rights reporting,** was conducted in August 2013 and focused on understanding existing media platforms and audiences. The key objective of this section was to identify and evaluate the media platforms that children and youth, parents and child rights organisations, and decision- and policy-makers generally use for information sharing, education and entertainment. Another objective was to pinpoint those that provide opportunities for further expansion in terms of access and information coverage.

Part II, **The media perspective,** was conducted in September 2013 and assessed the media's treatment of child rights, i.e. the way in which child rights violations, and policies, social, political and other aspects are generally presented to the public across a variety of platforms. Focus groups and interviews with media professionals – including media owners and journalists – were conducted in various cities across the three countries to gather views on the potential of child rights media activities, as well as to discuss details of the current media landscape. Additionally, media interactions during this research phase helped identify strategies to improve and develop standards of coverage, and better engage children and advocates in child rights media coverage.

The final in-country research phase, Part III, **The civil society perspective,** was conducted in October 2013. It directly engaged child rights advocates and civil society to understand how media is currently used by civil society to present information and influence the discourse on child rights; and to outline how civil society can be better supported to network with media and use its strength to improve advocacy, engagement and empowerment of children and youth. Civil society focus groups and individual interviews were held in various cities across the three countries to discuss details of the civil society sector, trends in media use, and to compile suggestions from child rights advocates on how civil society can be supported to protect child rights through media.

Through a combination of desk review and individual interviews with government officials, research also

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2   *Missed opportunities: How media in India, Kenya and Brazil present child rights,* Douglas Gould and Company (DG&Co.), 2013.

Members of a community taking part in a project to create dialogue between citizens, media and local authorities in Pakistan, 2012. © INTERNEWS EUROPE / IMRAN BABUR

reviewed current government policies and public discourse on child rights. This was to help inform how best to support advocates, media and government in a 'joined-up response' to improve government policy on protecting children, and its implementation.

MEDIA CONTENT ANALYSIS

The **content analysis study**[3] assesses the quantity and quality (on a 9-point scale – see box page 10) of child rights news coverage, information and child programming, focusing on some of the largest and most influential news and information channels and programmes in India, Brazil and Kenya. This study also measured social media traffic associated with country-specific child rights violations and policy debates.

METHODOLOGY

A pool of television and newspaper outlets and radio news and information programmes was selected in each country based on their audience size and ability to influence policy and public debate. A good mix of geographic and language coverage was ensured. While many TV channels were national platforms, radio and newspapers tended to be local. Technical aspects linked to the need for researchers to have access to content played a part in the final selection. Specifically, the print and television outlets selected needed to have a searchable website; and for radio, live-streaming programmes relevant to the study were required. In-country media researchers led the selection processes, providing direct local knowledge and expertise. In collaboration with in-country researchers, at least seven – and up to 10 – outlets per country were identified for both print and television. As regards social media traffic on child rights, a high-level social media scan of child rights content using the Radian6 database was conducted, testing the use of social media to communicate on child rights incidents (i.e. how social media platforms are used to pass information on child rights issues), and to communicate on child rights policy (i.e. how child rights advocates, policy-makers, etc. use social media to pass information linked to child rights laws, practices and policies).

The print and television search was conducted in June 2013, while for radio coverage, the media

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3 *Missed opportunities: How media in India, Kenya and Brazil present child rights*, Douglas Gould and Company (DG&Co.), 2013.

Young Somali boys wait to enter Ifo refugee camp in Dadaab, Kenya, 2011. Access to information, especially in refugee camps, is particularly vital but often difficult to access. © INTERNEWS EUROPE / MERIDITH KOHUT

research team listened to programmes streamed live during August 2013. The methodology varied because radio news coverage, in general, is not archived and therefore a historical sample was not available. The search period for social media varied by country; there was approximately 35-45 days of social media data analysed per country.

An initial search of each country's selected media provided an aggregate pool from which a sample for analysis was randomly selected. From each country's pool, a smaller study sample was pulled (100 print/TV broadcast news items, plus a varying number of radio news items per country). The pulled content was then closely reviewed to assess the type of coverage, the quality of coverage and content of child rights based on nine variables; spokespeople; occurrence of child/youth-produced content; and advocate-produced content.

NINE-POINT VARIABLE SCALE

To evaluate the quality and media coverage of child rights, a nine-point rating system was created with variables based on quality, and depth and context of coverage. The quality factors, drawn from the International Federation of Journalists (IFJ)[4] assessed quality of content based on how well it: • avoids stereotypes of children such as portraying them as helpless victims • sensationalised coverage of crime or violations of children's rights • protects the privacy of children • amplifies children's voices • and verifies information provided by children. The variables measuring depth and context of coverage[5] examined the inclusion of discussion of: • relevant policies and laws • of the possibility for improvement and means of solution • information on how children and parents can protect children's rights and get help.

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4   The International Federation of Journalists in 2001 adopted 11 guidelines to support media in achieving this standard of quality coverage. The full list of IFJ guidelines can be found at http://www.ifj.org/assets/docs/247/254/cf73bf7-c75e9fe.pdf

5   Sensationalised coverage is defined as: "Editorial bias towards titillating or highly emotional issues, deliberately provoking controversy and distorting facts to increase viewership or readership; exploitation of one or more elements in a story while ignoring facts or important contextual or policy issues; blowing incidents out of proportion by generalizing the actions of a few to the many, exaggerating, fear-mongering, etc."

1 BRAZIL:
TRANSFORMING HOW CHILDREN ARE SEEN AND HEARD

Brazil's strong economic growth and rising employment present the state with the challenge of translating this growth into improving the lives of the country's most vulnerable populations, including full protection for the more than 63 million children and adolescents who comprise a third of Brazil's population – 45% of which live below the poverty line.[6]

Getting an accurate assessment of children at risk in Brazil is challenging because most research is based on household data, meaning children on the streets or in slums – who face extreme adversity – are under-reported. Children in Brazil face multiple risks on a daily basis, including child mortality, child labour, child exploitation, violence, malnutrition, HIV/AIDS, poor education and low school registration. Estimates for the number of street children vary widely, with some putting the figure as high as 8 million. Sexual exploitation of children and adolescents is also a high-profile issue in Brazil, and although society has become more sensitive to the subject, persistent stumbling blocks are the impunity of perpetrators and a lack of implementation and inadequate translation of policy into action. Furthermore, the high rate of child imprisonment poses a great dilemma – of the 345,000 young offenders and adult criminals in Brazil, 17.4% are children and adolescents under 18 years. According to the Secretariat for Promoting the Rights of Children and Adolescents, about 70% of transgressor adolescents end up committing new crimes after leaving prison.[7] Their image in the media as 'dangers to society' exposes them to yet further risks, and puts their future prospects at stake.

BRAZIL

Salvador da Bahia

Brasilia

Sao Paulo

Rio de Janeiro

GOVERNMENT CHILD RIGHTS POLICY AND PRACTICE

The most important policy on child rights in Brazil is the Child and Adolescent Statute (ECA), approved in 1990 following the Child and Adolescents' Convention. It is a landmark in establishing children as citizens with rights, and has been a very important instrument for laying down guidelines for civil society and policy-makers. The Statute regulates Article 227 of the Brazilian Constitution, which assigns priority to protecting children's rights. The ECA also created the Child and Adolescent National Council (Conanda), which is responsible for drawing up general guidelines for child rights policies and evaluating the effectiveness of national policies on child rights. Other legal landmarks that contribute to the promotion of child rights are: Ordinance no.

6 'Mais de 27 milhões de crianças vivem na pobreza no Brasil, diz Unicef', Folha Online, 9 December, 2004. Available at http://www1.folha.uol.com.br/folha/mundo/ult94u79092.shtml (accessed 17 December, 2013).

7 Dimenstein, Gilberto. 'Menores infratores representam 17,4% da população carcerária do país', *Folha de São Paulo*, 24 November, 2003. Available at http://bit.ly/18xocRA (accessed 17 December, 2013).

20 (2001), prohibiting any kind of child labour under the age of 16;[8] Ordinance no. 1201 (June 2007), regulating the TV rating system;[9] and Constitutional Amendment 59 (2009),[10] making education obligatory for children between the ages of 4-17.

I. THE BRAZILIAN MEDIA LANDSCAPE

The media in Brazil plays an important role in shaping social conversation and views on child rights, as it has the power to broaden the scope of debate among a large audience. However, with the concentration of media outlets in the hands of a few powerful people, it is extremely challenging to discuss and maintain a good debate on social issues and human rights in the media. There is therefore a great necessity to improve communication and reporting on children's rights, as emphasised by many educators and public administrators.

Brazil's media form a complex multidimensional system with different levels of power and communication strategies. The Brazilian Institute of Public Opinion and Statistics (Ibope) 2013 database shows that television networks reach 97% of Brazilians and 90% have access to radio, demonstrating the importance of mass media in Brazil.[11] According to the National Agency for Telecommunication (Anatel), all of 5,565 Brazilian towns are reached by TV networks, however only 270 towns have access to cable TV.[12] The use of the Internet has increased rapidly – according to the Center of Studies on Communication and Information Technology, 49% of Brazilians have Internet access.[13] In addition, Brazilians spent an average 27 hours per month on the Internet in 2012. It is important to stress that the Internet serves a large audience amongst the middle-class and the elite, but not among less-privileged social classes. Expensive Internet connection fees limit inclusion, explaining why 80% of the lowest income groups never use the Internet, and only 10% of households in rural areas have Internet connection.[14]

TV VIEWING PATTERNS IN BRAZIL

Broadcast TV viewership patterns across the major networks, as reported by Ibope in 2012, are as follows: Globo captures 14.7% of audience share; Record 6.2%; SBT 5.6%; Band 2.5%; and RedeTV! 0.9%. One of the reasons Globo captures such a large viewership is because of the importance of soap operas in Brazilian culture. On prime time, between 7-10pm, Globo's main soap operas received a 35% share of the audience.[15] Soap operas often include discussions on important social issues, which have been known to have a significant impact on Brazilian society. Thus, it is essential to address children and adolescent issues on or between these programmes.

Viewership trends of cable television continue to be dominated by the large broadcasters and are as follows: Globo attracts 37% of the audience; Record 11%; SBT 6.4%; Band 3.7%; Discovery Kids 3.1%; SporTV 2.6%; Cartoon Network 2.3%; 2.3%; Disney Channel 1.8%; Nickelodeon 1.5%; and RedeTV! 0.9%. The presence of child content programming on cable versus broadcast television is notable and those channels do capture a small yet recorded segment of the audience. However, it is important to note that only 25% of Brazilians have access to cable TV, as compared to near 100% on the broadcast platform (Anatel).[16]

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8   See http://www.andi.org.br/sites/default/files/ legislacao/p_20010913_20.pdf (accessed 23 December, 2013).

9   See http://bit.ly/J87PyX (accessed 23 December, 2013).

10   See http://bit.ly/1dpqEqO (accessed 23 December, 2013).

11   Ibope, *Media Book*. Available at http://www.mediabook.ibope.com/ (accessed 17 December, 2013).

12   'Proposal for a regulation of the new cable TV service. *Brasília*, 29 June, 2011. Available at http://bit.ly/18TzWvI (accessed December 17, 2013).

13   Sallowicz, Mariana. 'Acesso à internet no Brasil cresce, mas 53% da população ainda não usa a rede', Folha Online, 16 May, 2013. Available at http://bit.ly/18UAthc (accessed 17 December, 2013).

14   Maciel, Camila. 'Acesso à internet alcança 40% das residências brasileiras, aponta pesquisa', Agência Brasil, 20 June, 2013. Available at http://agenciabrasil.ebc.com.br/noticia/2013-06-20/acesso-internet-alcanca-40-das-residencias-brasileiras-aponta-pesquisa (accessed 17 December, 2013).

15   Feltrin, Ricardo. 'Ibope da Globo em horário nobre fica 'estagnado' em 2013', *UOL Notícia*, 6 August, 2013. Available at http://bit.ly/1fCrS4r (accessed 17 December, 2013).

16   'Cerca de 49 milhões de brasileiros tem TV por assinatura', Agência Brasil, 8 August, 2012. Available at http://bit.ly/1hZJ9Ie (accessed 17 December, 2013).

Caixa de Sopresas is a community-based, non-governmental organisation that works to reduce the vulnerability of youth living in Bangú, Brazil. Many of these youth live in the community along the side of the train tracks. Caixa de Sopresas builds on young people's creativity and intelligence by engaging them in performing arts and musical productions that help them overcome their social and psychological struggles. © TIANA MARKOVA-GOLD

In terms of concentration, newspapers are slightly different to radio and television outlets, but concentration is still an issue. There are many small-scale newspapers throughout the country, usually controlled by a political group, and few with broader coverage. The top 10 newspapers with the widest circulation are owned by five news corporations.[17] Additionally, it is very common for news agencies to purchase their content from larger news sources, further restricting the diversity of content published.

According to Brazil's Communication Ministry report, radio reaches 88% of the population across all social classes.[18] However, radio listenership is fragmented and localised. Thus, the research and selection of stations for this report were based on Ibope's local surveys[19] (which reveal the main stations in specific cities) and on their coverage scope. Radio outlets are identified as networks capable of accessing different parts of the country, classes and social groups.

17   Circulation Verification Institute's (IVC) research. Available at http://bit.
ly/1fCy3Fx (accessed 17 December, 2013).

18   Craide, Sabrina. 'Rádio está presente em 88% das residências e número de emissoras dobra em 10 anos', Agência Brasil, 13 February, 2013. Available at http://bit.ly/JEAE7t (accessed 17 December 2013).

19   For Ibope methodology on radio viewership research, see Figueiredo, O. and Ursini, N. 'O radio em números', *Meio&Mensagem Magazine*, 4 May, 2012. Available at http://bit.ly/18UAcuu (accessed 17 December 2013).

CHILDREN AND TV: AN INVISIBLE AUDIENCE

While nearly all children and youth in Brazil have access to television, the narrowness of child-focused programmes means they see little content relevant to their experience and circumstances – a situation compounded by the lack of newspaper supplements for children and/or about childhood. Another fundamental matter is the non-existence of media programmes for the empowerment of children and adolescents. Media experts highlighted that child-centred projects and initiatives are sparse, often face difficulties securing funding, and have little impact on the general public.

The penetration index of television is 94.5% among children between 6-9 years, and 96.3% among adolescents aged 10-18, according to research group, Interactive Generation Brazil.[20] Nevertheless, the largest TV station, Rede Globo, provides only one children's slot, on Saturday mornings. Moreover, the few programmes that are offered to children by broadcast TV are all national, leaving a complete void of children's programming on the regional schedule. On cable TV, however, there are some cartoon channels for children, and the most watched in descending order are: Cartoon Network, DiscoveryKids, Nickelodeon and Gloob – the Globo child TV channel.

While in general there are more programmes on broadcast TV geared toward adolescents and youth than children, all lack in-depth discussion on child and adolescent rights and issues. Nonetheless, according to the Brazilian Institute of Geography and Statistics (IBGE), 78% of teenagers watch TV for at least two hours per day.[21] On cable TV, the main channels are those that show series, movies and sports, but there is a good weekly programme, produced by the NGO Afrorregae, that discusses important issues, called *Conexões Urbanas*.

However some of Globo's programmes touch on a wide range of social issues. *Esquenta* addresses issues related to popular culture and, specifically,

A young participant of the Quixote Project, which works with street children in São Paulo. © EDUARDO MARTINO / PANOS

to the favelas; *Na moral* is a talk show addressing themes such as abortion, drugs, the job market, etc.; *Profissão Repórter* is a weekly report programme made by young journalists; and *Malhação* is a daily soap opera addressing adolescent and youth issues. Other channels such as Band offer programmes such as *CQC*, a journalistic comedy discussing politics and politicians; TV Cultura, through its *Manos e Mina*s programme, explores hip-hop cultures, and also broadcasts *Pedro e Bianca*, a TV series for adolescents, and *Quem sabe, sabe!*, an educational game show. Meanwhile, TV Brasil airs *Estúdio Móvel*, a programme on youth, art and culture.

20   Passarelli, B, and Junqueira, A.H. *Gerações Interativas Brasil: crianças e adolescentes diante das telas*. São Paulo: Escola do Futuro/USP, 2012. Available at http://bit.ly/1bc9pGL (accessed 17 December, 2013).

21   Leal, Luciana N, and Neder, V. 'Jovens se alimentam mal, se exercitam pouco e veem TV demais, mostra pesquisa', *O Estado de São Paulo*, 19 June, 2013. Available at http://bit.ly/11VoMPb (accessed December 17, 2013).

KEY FINDINGS BY INTERNEWS EUROPE'S STUDY[22] ANALYSING CHILD RIGHTS CONTENT ACROSS PRINT, TELEVISION, RADIO AND SOCIAL MEDIA

- In the research carried out for this report, 25% of the news items selected for Brazil included a broader child right's context. The issue accounting for the greatest percentage of coverage across all traditional media outlets was child health/nutrition (26%), followed by physical or sexual abuse of children (20%), and child labour (20%). Of note is the absence of stories about child marriage, inheritance, sexual exploitation/child prostitution and sexuality/sex.

- Television coverage of child rights issues was found to be significantly better than print or radio coverage.

- Radio stories containing child rights content amounted for 58% of radio news content.

- Surprisingly 2% of news items had a negative or anti-child slant, given the heated debate within the child advocacy community about child age of responsibility and criminalisation of children, while 50% were positive/pro-child and 48% were neutral. It is interesting to note the different trends in story topic by media type. TV coverage of child labour was high, but there was none on child health issues. Meanwhile, child trafficking and health issues were significant topics for radio.

- While citizen journalism is on the rise, especially in today's social-media saturated market, none of the news items included in the random sample for Brazil could be categorised as child/youth-developed content, meaning there are no newspaper articles, radio broadcasts or TV segments produced by children or youth.

- The majority of quotes in news items or radio news programmes, where applicable, were attributed to policy-makers such as government officials and legislators – more than twice as often as the nearest category, social workers. This shows that policy-makers are seen as trusted voices and authority figures – and people that represent public opinion. On the other hand, 24% of news stories contained advocate-sourced content.

- Nearly 40% of news items revealed the age of the child, although the media is not making the same distinction about age as the advocacy community. They tend to use the age of a child to add additional detail to a story rather than for child rights or policy context, for instance in the case of a physical/sexual abuse, or a child health/child labour violation. This is against the backdrop of a policy debate on changing the age of adulthood from 18 to 16, especially in relation to criminalisation.

THE DEBATE ON LOWERING THE AGE OF ADULTHOOD AND CRIMINAL RESPONSIBILITY

An editorial from newspaper *Diario Gaucho* focuses on the policy issue of reducing the age of adulthood from 18 to 16, and the problem of prisons breeding violent crime.

At the center of the criminal law populist debate, which, in a confrontational way, preaches incarceration as a solution for everything, we have been hearing, feeling and absorbing night and day the motto to lower the age of criminal responsibility, as if that would solve the youth criminality. It's not that teens are innocent people, who are unable to understand the illicit nature of their acts. It's quite the opposite and far from that! They can distinguish right from wrong and, yes, they must be held accountable for their actions.

The problem is that prisons are truly schools of criminality. Today, almost all serious crimes originated in the prison system, where offenders coexist, exchange experiences, plan and give execution orders for the most barbaric crimes. The prisons play the role of a university (for criminality) even for adults, let alone for the youth! With their personalities already in incipient deviation, but still being (de)formed, they coexist with experienced offenders, in a hostile, inhospitable and the catalyst of a pure violent environment.

('LOWERING THE AGE OF CRIMINAL', *DIARIO GAUCHO*, 2013)

22 *Missed opportunities: How media in India, Kenya and Brazil present child rights*, Douglas Gould and Company (DG&Co.), 2013.

- The correlation between commemorative days on child health and child labour (such as the World Day Against Child Labour, held annually on 12 June, the countrywide Polio Immunisation Campaign, and World Breastfeeding Week), and the level of topic coverage confirm that events marking such a day, and report releases as a news hook, are a successful strategy to engage Brazilian media. These commemorative days can also be used to ramp up feature and editorial coverage – 23% of print articles were tied to a commemorative day, event or report release. The majority of this coverage was hard news, with one editorial and a few features. News items about child health (26%) included a wide variety of topics from the polio immunisation campaign and the health benefits of breast milk, to the issue of childhood obesity.

RADIO AND CHILD RIGHTS: UNTAPPED POTENTIAL

Although there are community radio initiatives across the country, there is a shortage of radio programming for children.[23] Generally, radio programming is nearly exclusively focused on music and news. Nonetheless, according to research conducted in 2003 by the Multifocus Institute, 86.5% of children listened to radio on a regular basis.[24] In 2011, children represented 8% of overall radio listenership, according to a Midia Dados research.[25]

Currently there are five child-centred radio initiatives that are important to mention: Radio Brincar, a web radio initiative produced by Radio Educativa FM from Bahia; RadioRadinho, a web radio initiative that plays music for children; Radio Margarida, an NGO that produces educational radio programming; the programme *Viva a Vida*, conducted by the Pastoral da Criança (Pastoral Care of Child); and the programme *Estação Brincadeira*, broadcast by EBC Rio Radio. While RadioRadinho is only available on the web, Radio Brincar will soon be broadcast in Salvador; and Radio Margarida and Viva a Vida

have the potential to be distributed to Brazilian radio networks. *Estação Brincadeira* reaches only Rio de Janeiro. However, EBC is a public station that covers the north, southeast and midwest of the country, and has affiliates throughout.

Programmes targeting adolescents and young people do exist, but they do not engage in deep discussions on child rights, nor is the content produced by youth. These programmes include the JovemPan network, which has about 70 stations; 20% of listeners range from 10-17 years old, and are primarily from middle and upper social classes.[26] This network covers several Brazilian states and provides music, news and comedy programmes.

Child and youth readership of newspapers is generally low, with only 5% of children aged 10-14 years according to Mídia Dados.[27] Although there is a lack of specific supplements for adolescents and young people, there are sections dedicated to children such as: Folha de São Paulo (São Paulo), Estado de São Paulo (São Paulo), O Dia (Rio de Janeiro), A Tarde (Bahia), O Povo (Ceará), Correio Braziliense (Brasilia D.F.), Diário do Pará (Pará), Jornal do Comercio (Pernambuco) and Zero Hora (Rio Grande do Sul).

THE INTERNET, TWITTER, CHILDREN AND YOUTH

The Internet is very popular among adolescents and younger children, with 60% of them accessing it daily; in the subgroup aged 15-19 years, this figure rises to over 70%. Research conducted by Interactive Generation Forum, Ibope and Future School of São Paulo University compared the ownership of computers by children in different areas in Brazil, contrasting the more wealthy southern states to the less well-off northern regions.[28]

23 Riberio, Adriana. 'Criança ainda ouve rádio?' In: *Revistapontocom*, Rio de Janeiro, 19 October, 2012. Available at http://www.revistapontocom. br/artigos/crianca-ainda-ouve-radio (accessed December 17, 2013).

24 Ibid.

25 Mídia Dados is an Institute conducting research on media consumption. Their latest publication, 'Mídia Dados Brasil 2013', is available at https:// mdb2013.bbi.net.br/ (accessed 17 December, 2013).

26 Estudos Marplan research. Available at http://issuu.com/jovempan/docs/ portfolio (accessed 12 December, 2013).

27 Kozma, Cacá (Coordinator). 'Mídia Dados Brasil 2013', Grupo de Mídia, 2013. Available at https://mdb2013.bbi.net.br/ (accessed 17 December, 2013).

28 Barbosa, Alexandre (Coord. executiva e editorial). T*IC Kids Online Brasil 2012: pesquisa sobre o uso da Internet por crianças e adolescentes*. São Paulo: Comitê Gestor da Internet no Brasil, 2013. Available at http://www. cetic.br/publicacoes/2012/tic-kids-online-2012.pdf (accessed 12 December, 2013).

Children using computers at the Children's Culture Centre in Morro dos Macacos favela, Rio de Janeiro. © JON SPAULL / PANOS

Ownership of personal computers by children in Brazil
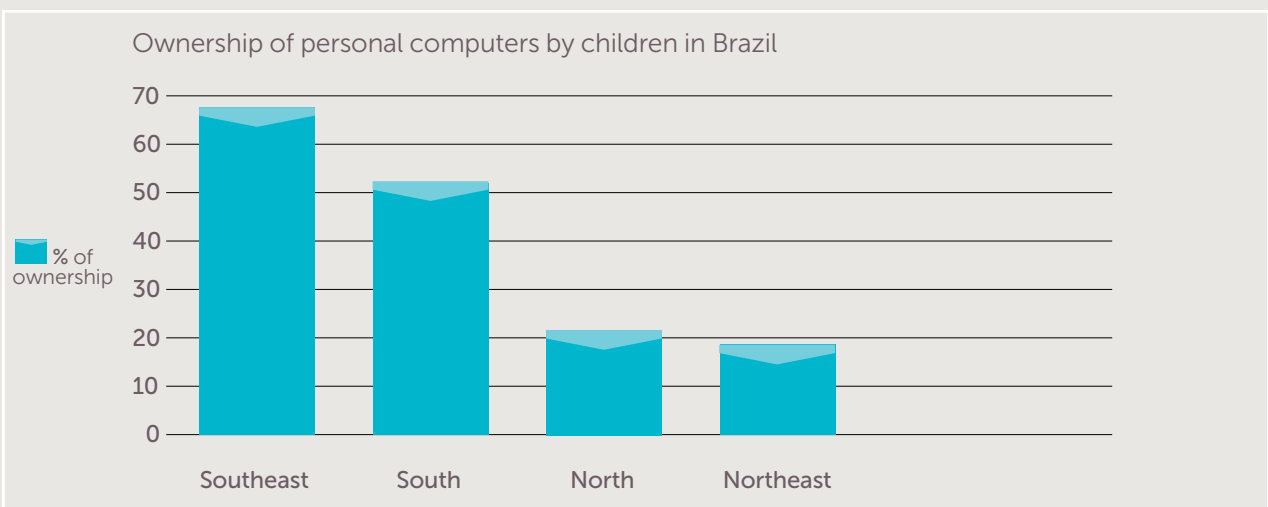
Facebook, for instance, was used by 61% of respondents. However, its potential has not yet been fully explored; one issue is that children have much more limited use of the Internet than adolescents: they cannot have profiles on Facebook, and using this medium requires a good literacy level. Finally, websites frequented by children or youth are usually purely for entertainment reasons. The most accessed ones are the cartoon channels' sites,[29] followed by some educational games sites. The Internet, given the strong use of social media by Brazil's middle class and elite, could be used to discuss children's and adolescent issues, and to highlight efforts of civil society organisations in this area. Furthermore, the Internet could be used as a tool to support debate, and engage decision-makers to influence stakeholders.

Using Radian6, the leading social media analysis programme, the research team looked at the number of mentions for selected keywords related to child rights across different social media channels. Twitter was found to be the leading platform in Brazil in relation to child rights news content in social media, with a 55.1% share of coverage of this topic; blogs followed at 33.2%, with Facebook at 11.3%. It is interesting to note that Orkut, a social networking website owned and operated by Google, lists 53% of its users as being from Brazil.[30]

It was found that generally, incidents and policy measures on child rights issues did not resonate with social media audiences and therefore there was no real conversation about them. However, social media tools were shown to be very effective among children and adolescents – increasing child rights debates using these platforms could lead to greater participation of young people on the issue. The adequate use and volume of social media can be increased by improving and sustaining social media profiles for CSOs and advocates, while training them to maximise the use of social media tools.

II. THE MEDIA PERSPECTIVE

Challenges in getting child and adolescent rights issues into the media are often associated with the media's low level of understanding of child rights issues, and increasing competition for audiences leading to sensationalised coverage, mostly portraying children and youth as menaces to society. Moreover, media professionals also noted the absence of a network between child rights advocates and the media that would support greater and improved coverage of child rights. While the media has access to civil society as sources of information, there is no established mechanism for collaborative or long-term partnerships.

However, these challenges also present an opportunity for initiatives supporting and engaging media professionals. There are also opportunities to support media outlets to avoid violation of existing Brazilian guidelines on child and adolescents rights. While organisations have attempted such programmes in the past, there remains a need for broader and continued action, including hosting workshops and seminars for professionals and sharing reports on coverage quality with media houses.

NEWS AND CHILD RIGHTS: LACKING IN DEPTH

In news and information sectors, children and youth rights content tends to be limited to factual coverage, lacking depth – except for the sparse coverage of educational content and on children and youth channels, radio stations and newspaper supplements. Human rights issues are a focal subject in Brazil, because of their constant violation across many sectors. Nevertheless, according to media experts interviewed for this study, news and information outlets in Brazil tend to highlight the subject of violence, resulting in a largely sensationalised approach to human rights issues, inclusive of child rights (this is largely associated with the TV networks Band and Record). Within this context, better child rights content is generated when it is tied to reporting on new policy proposals, government programmes, or when media outlets choose to cover a special or particular child and youth rights issue.

29   Braun, Daniela. 'Grupo de internautas de 2 a 11 anos cresce 19% em um ano no Brasil', G1, 13 June, 2012. Available on http://glo.bo/MEpTMp (accessed 17 December, 2013).

30   See http://www.alexa.com/siteinfo/orkut.com.

Different views were presented on the core reason for current trends in coverage of child rights. Some media professionals believe current coverage is due to the country's social and economic problems – meaning that coverage follows trends in crime and violence, and presents what people "want to see". Other media professionals believe this is mostly because of the media outlets' own political and economic agenda. They argue that the agenda is rooted in ideological beliefs that benefit an upper class status quo and which sustain stereotypical and prejudicial views of lower classes.

Violence is frequently associated with youth and has its own set of language characteristics. Words such as 'minor', 'delinquent' and 'juvenile offender' tend to appear frequently in traditional media coverage, reinforcing stigmas and stereotypes. This stereotypical approach to a specific and large portion of the population can also be seen in media coverage of people living in favelas or in very low-income conditions, and again works to reinforce social inequality.

Media professionals also note that different media outlets produce coverage designed for their main consumers. Thus different media outlets adopt styles that reinforce stereotypes understood to appeal to their particular audience group. These practices are not exclusive to child rights coverage, but apply to all content and influence the general way in which media content in Brazil is produced. In this sense, shifting the way media presents human rights issues, including child rights, is a delicate matter and one that demands a shift not only in practice but also in beliefs and political opinions, and requires sustained and targeted investment.

Moreover, media professionals are expected to cover a broad range of issues – from economics to sport – rather than develop expertise in a specific subject. Human rights are a broad content area, and thus tend to be presented in more general ways rather than through specialised contexts or expert viewpoints. Consequently, child rights issues are covered across Brazilian media within the wide scope of general news coverage.

CHILD ANONYMITY: A RIGHT IGNORED

A lack of media adherence to the Child and Adolescents' Statute (Estatuto da Criança e do Adolescente – ECA) is another critical issue for child rights media content. Under the Statute, media outlets are instructed to not identify children and adolescents under any circumstance, protecting children's identities in relation to photography, any reference to their name (including initials and surname), nickname, affiliation, kinship and residence. Nonetheless, media frequently violate these guidelines, sometimes using initials, showing the child's neighbourhood, and publishing photographs with black stripes over the child's eyes (which do not preclude identification). This kind of disrespect for ECA is especially serious in regional and small media outlets. Media professionals do note, however, that this situation is tied to the fact that media are not trained or are undertrained in dealing with children and youth rights.

In contrast to traditional media production, the Internet enables child rights content to be produced with little or no expense, thus removing the commercial pressures and allowing for non-commercial and individual 'sponsors'. As traditional media content is often based on political, economic or ideological views, the Internet can support production of content on issues that are otherwise sparsely addressed or that have little political or economic backing, such as child rights. One recent Internet approach that has caught the traditional media's attention is Recontando, a website coordinated by journalist Simone Ronzani that retells news and information content available in other media outlets. Launched earlier this year, the website focuses on translating already produced news content and information into a language easily understood by children. Ronzani's project was driven by personal experience and interest, and was launched after frequent rejection of the idea by traditional media outlets. Nevertheless, social media outlets that offer a great potential to improve the debate on important child rights matters remain under-used. Some organisations have a Twitter profile and Facebook fan page, but these remain uninspiring in terms of the number of users and their interest, despite relatively high usage by young people.

Supporting and promoting the Child and Adolescents' Statute is a fundamental step towards improving the understanding of child issues, and sensitising media professionals on the matter. Media monitoring and guidelines for content production can also be effective initiatives. Media training on how to integrate children and youth voices into media content can increase awareness and media interest in more engaging production. Another important approach in amplifying children's voices is to enable and promote child-produced content, addressing their views and daily experiences, especially of those largely stigmatised by the media.

Initiatives include content produced through educational projects that is then distributed through a specific partner network, radio station or newspaper, or that promotes its content directly on the web through mediums such as YouTube, Facebook, Twitter, personal blog pages or websites. Investment in educational projects, as such, can be an important initiative not only to promote child produced content, but also to promote children and youth rights issues through their own lens and language. Media training should thus not focus only on teaching how to produce and distribute specific content, but also support improved media analysis and criticism of existing content and propose a better approach on child and youth rights.

CHILD PROGRAMMING: OFFERING A DIFFERENT APPROACH

Child programming on Brazil's primary traditional platforms is in a similar state to its news and information content, with little or no direct information or content dedicated to child rights issues. When, on rare occasions, it is presented, it is as a product to be consumed and not a subject to engage children's participation.

Nonetheless, when inserted into an educational context, TV, radio and newspaper content as well as magazines and children's books can offer a different approach. This context can be integrated into basic school learning as a central or auxiliary learning tool. Initiatives such as Recontando are used in classroom activities and can address varied subjects, including child and youth rights. Programmes such as Telecurso (both on Globo networks and TV Brasil)

Eloi Pereira's daughter Suelen plays with his mobile phone in their Projecto Cingapura apartment - part of a scheme to rehouse families from favelas in high-rise apartment blocks.
© EDUARDO MARTINO / PANOS

offer specific content for schools, and can also be an interesting platform for child rights.

Therefore, educational programming offers a unique opportunity for improving child rights content in children's programming, and provides a platform for better sharing of child rights news and information for children and/or content produced by them. For successful results, such initiatives need also to reach out to school staff, parents and the wider community.

Aside from educational programming, amplifying children's participation in programming using child-friendly and child-representative language, as well as child-produced content, are necessary steps to increase and secure child rights. Other opportunities, similar to improving news and information content, include supporting and promoting the Child and Adolescents' Statute, media training, improved guidelines, Internet-driven content and child-produced content. Although child-produced content is scarce in Brazil, one exception worth mentioning is TV Piá (TV Brasil), a child-friendly programme presenting child views through child-created content on a variety of subjects. The programme highlights educational, cultural and sports issues, and could easily address other subjects including child rights.

MEDIA ACTIVITIES TO PROTECT CHILD RIGHTS

Guidelines such as the Child and Adolescents' Statute and the media rating system for audiovisual content including films, games and TV programmes are important measures to support child rights on privacy, identity and image. These are led by the Ministry of Justice, through the Department of Justice, Classification, Title and Qualification (Departamento de Justiça, Classificação, Título e Qualificação – DEJUS) and strongly supported by ANDI, the Brazilian News Agency for Children's Rights. ANDI leads other initiatives to improve media content linked to children's rights, including distributing literature on Public Communication Policies (Políticas Publicas da Comunicação – PPCom) and promoting a better regulatory system on media content. ANDI's guidelines reinforce fundamental aspects in need of better support: media training and education, quality production incentives, national and regional content production, child produced content, children's image and identity rights, content impact evaluation, suitable age and programme time propositions, advertisement regulations, child labour in media outlets, and inclusion and protection on new media.

Media literacy has been widely explored by CSO initiatives on media and human rights in Brazil. Many of these projects focus on online media content, as it is a more democratic and accessible distribution medium. There are three key projects that have gained large recognition: the Escola Polular de Comunicação Crítica[31] (Community school for critical communication/engagement) of the NGO Observatorio de Favelas (Rio de Janeiro), the School of Citizen Journalism of Bahia and Media Literacy programme of the Federal University of Triângulo Mineiro (UFTM)[32] in partnership with UNESCO. Journalist training programmes focusing on child rights media coverage is another important initiative led by ANDI and the University Jorge Amado, in Salvador, Bahia.

Finally, there are several major awards for child rights reporting in Brazil, including the Child-Friendly Journalist Award granted by ANDI to media professionals who have addressed children's issues; and the Tim Lopes Award and Vladmir Herzog Award, which are awarded to quality human rights reporting.

MEDIA RELATIONS WITH CIVIL SOCIETY ORGANISATIONS AND GOVERNMENT

Media professionals only describe child rights advocates as sources, and don't consider them as allies. ANDI provides a mechanism for strengthening dialogue between the media and advocates, but does not provide a direct network for collaboration.

On the other hand, Observatorio de Favelas, a non-profit organisation in Rio de Janeiro, has been serving as a conduit between the media and civil society and has established itself as a reliable mediator and information source. Its website is often visited by media professionals to gain a professional outlook from sociologists, psychologists and human rights experts.

Largely, however, the relationship between the media and child rights CSOs is a one-way street, catering to the needs of the media. Media can access CSOs easily through their websites and other social network sites, and can easily establish contact whenever needed. On the other hand, engagement in the opposite direction is not fluid or easy. Thus, CSOs have had great difficulties in contacting media outlets and professionals, as most media outlets lack transparency and accountability, and often intentionally avoid approaches from civil society. This approach has created a rather tense relationship between the media and CSOs, with advocates seeing the media as intentionally controlling information and access.

The Internet has been frequently used to establish and maintain the relationship between the media and CSOs. Social networking sites are often used as a first step of communication for media professionals for both contacts and complaints, as well as reporting on human rights violations. Thus, the Internet is an effective medium to improve links between CSOs and the media, and thus improve media coverage of child rights.

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31   See http://www.espocc.org.br/ (accessed 23 December, 2013).

32   The programme's presentation is available at: http://www.uftm.edu.br/ redeci/images/APRESENTACAO.pdf (accessed 19 December, 2013).

Unfortunately, as it is the case with CSOs, there is no permanent or mutual network between the media and the government. The media primarily contacts the governement for infromation while the government approaches the media to communicate on events and campaigns. The relationship between the two parties is maintained merely for information purposes.

CHALLENGES AND OPPORTUNITIES: ENGAGING THE MEDIA ON CHILD RIGHTS

The primary challenge encountered by the research team, and corroborated by media professionals, is the difficulty in engaging media outlets and sustaining their attention and participation in activities to enhance and improve the child rights sector. Another challenge is convincing some outlets and professionals that good quality coverage on child rights would be of interest to the audience. In their words, market pressure could be an obstacle to engage the media in child rights.

On the other hand, training and network-building activities were found to be significant to media representatives, helping them avoid violations of guidelines, and promoting social responsibility initiatives. However, during the course of this research, great difficulties were had in contacting most media outlets, demonstrating little interest in participating in the focus groups and in engaging in a dialogue with CSOs. Globo for instance, the major media outlet in Brazil with the highest audience rates, declined invitations to participate in our research and clearly revealed a lack of interest in external activities on child rights, considering its own research and social initiatives as sufficient.

Moroever, major media outlets are often rejected by CSOs as partners given their controversial image and views. Some media corporates have been accused of serious illegal activities while running and promoting human rights campaigns and activities.

On a positive note, Rio de Janeiro's newspaper, *O Dia*, and Salvador's *Correio da Bahia*, showed an interest in an initial dialogue, and targeted their content at marginalised communities.

III. THE CIVIL SOCIETY PERSPECTIVE

CIVIL SOCIETY ORGANISATIONS AND TRADITIONAL MEDIA: DIVERSE BUT LIMITED ENGAGEMENT

CSOs have diverse but limited means of harnessing traditional media to support child rights advocacy. The diversity lies in the multiple media outlets and means available for use, from print to radio and television, while the limitations result from the media's informal 'restrictions' on the use of platforms by civil society.

The main engagement of child rights advocates with traditional media include:

- Content promotion, publication and distribution: CSOs often send their own content for publication and distribution, such as articles or audiovisual material.

- Child rights advocates are often consulted by media as experts for special issues on child rights, but these engagements rarely constitute long-term partnerships.

- Content and subject suggestion: CSOs often suggest important issues and subjects to media outlets. To overcome media resistance or potential rejection of ideas by the media, CSOs often suggest topics that are considered 'trending' or current.

- CSOs are occasionally granted the opportunity to analyse and critique media material, as the result of CSO partnerships with media outlets and programmes, such as TV Escola, Telecursos, TV Educativa (EBC) and Canal Futura. They do this to better understand current practices, weaknesses and support their own capacity building.

- While CSOs believe that traditional media have a significant impact on the public, they also believe that alternative media – smaller outlets with less commercial platforms – can be good partners and give them autonomy to show their views about their reality.

CIVIL SOCIETY AND MEDIA: SUCCESSFUL COLLABORATIONS

Collaborative initiatives involving CSOs and traditional media to promote diverse debates on child rights issues have shown to be successful, if limited:

- As a result of a partnership between Redes de Desenvolvimento da Maré and Canal Futura, several reports and interviews with the community of Maré, one of the largest favelas in Rio de Janeiro, were broadcast, highlighting human rights issues such as public health, education and safety. The collaboration also established a dialogue with communities often neglected by traditional media and government, and occasionally addressed child rights issues.

- Canal Futura financed a multimedia space at Redes' public library (Biblioteca Popular Lima Barreto). The Sala Futura promotes Futura's media content, especially on human rights issues for educational purposes, enabling a close relationship between education and media. Its content is frequently used at Redes' educational project, Programa Criança Petrobrás, which promotes child and youth empowerment, and dialogue between community and public institutions.

- Não Bata, Eduque[33] is considered a successful programme thanks to its national reach and how it addresses the importance of child education over physical punishment. It has a well-established campaign that focuses on social awareness and action. Through partnerships with different CSOs and worldwide networks, such as ANDI, Promundo, Save the Children and CEDECA, the project distributes promotional material for media, from radio jingles to audiovisual content, press releases, guidelines, pamphlets and manuals.

- Maré de Notícia, Maré's community newspaper (produced by Redes de Desenvolvimento da Maré) is a platform supporting CSO dialogue on important issues. This monthly paper has a distribution of 40,000 copies in a community of 170,000 inhabitants, and addresses local issues such as public education, health and security. It also involves the community in discourses with other public and large institutions, aiming to break down barriers between different social sectors by addressing issues such as violence and social inequality. It differs from commercial media in its willingness to address important social problems that are often ignored by other outlets using a more suitable language – one that avoids sensationalism and does not stigmatise and condemn the population from low-income regions.

- Criar Brasil's community radio and television projects[34] are also well known and valued nationally for their quality production on issues including child rights, and for their capacity building activities. Over the years, they have taught over 300 community media producers countrywide, and have produced many radio and television programmes, media guidelines and study support materials.

- Network ANDI is a good example of an umbrella organisation that successfully uses traditional media. The different CSOs working under ANDI have attempted to establish a good relationship with media outlets, addressed the importance of guidelines on child reporting, and suggested themes to be explored by the media. Cipó Network, ANDI's partner organisation based in Salvador, has been successful at providing guidelines and promoting training activities for journalists.

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33   See http://www.naobataeduque.org.br/ (accessed 23 December, 2013).

34   See http://www.criarbrasil.org.br/ (accessed 23 December, 2013).

Young students at a primary school in remote Itamatatuba, Amapa Province – an isolated community reached only by river. The Fluvial Court boat stops here once every two months, bringing doctors and social workers to provide services and community support. © EDUARDO MARTINO / PANOS

However, despite all the above-mentioned initiatives, there is still a poor quality of media content and approach to covering child rights issues. Based on the quality score indicators of Internews Europe's nine-point rating system to measure the quality of each news item, the average score for a Brazilian news item was 3.9, well below the median threshold and leaving considerable room for improvement in the way child rights stories are covered by the media. TV coverage of child rights issues was found to be significantly better than print or radio coverage, by nearly two points. This can be improved partially by building the capacity of media professionals and by CSOs suggesting content, as they already do. It can also be improved by narrowing the gap in relations between communities, media and public services.

To improve media coverage on child rights it is important that media professionals and outlets engage in a closer relationship with the communities they cover, to better understand their inhabitants and their needs – especially those living in poor communities. The media needs to begin to address issues from within the communities and not from an outside viewpoint – often one dominated by preconceived notions and stereotypes. Equally, improved use and understanding of media by CSOs and public service providers can be achieved, allowing them to better articulate and present 'good quality' media content reflecting the realities of their communities.

Another issue that influences the use of media is the complex relationship between CSOs and traditional media outlets which involves frequent confrontation resulting from their difference in views and discourses. CSOs often prefer to promote their own content through the alternative media, such as community newspapers and radio stations, and their own websites and social media. To improve CSOs' use of traditional media, any child rights media projects, and the media itself, must address the complex social, political and legal perspectives, and the problems that generally divide them.

A primary area of opportunity is to address the current lack of a child rights CSO network to empower their actions and projects by promoting, supporting and connecting them. This initiative would require creating a platform from which all child rights organisations could collaborate on an equal basis. The proposed network would also defend their values on child rights, establishing a scenario reflecting the importance of their work and child rights laws such as the Child and Adolescents' Statute.

Furthermore, the suggested platform would allow for the production of media content made available to traditional media outlets to promote their own initiatives on child rights issues. Another advantage of such a network would be the potential to train public service professionals on child rights issues – particularly public school teachers, health professionals and other government officials who lack a basic understanding of child rights and knowledge of the reality of the community with which they work. Finally, this network could effectively support media literacy training to empower children and youth to understand the power of media, and to better use those platforms to protect their rights.

CSOS AND NEW MEDIA

Child rights CSOs widely use new media, mostly through websites and social media networks such as Facebook and Twitter. However, their online media coverage is quite limited given the small number of users and followers. Their main uses of these platforms is to share knowledge; establish a dialogue with their audience and other CSOs and media outlets; report human rights violations and share reports; promote child and youth empowerment by using new media in educational and media production programmes; publish their own materials, such as articles and audiovisual resources; promote special campaigns on child rights and raise awareness; and build a network of alternative media producers allowing them to create, promote and distribute their productions at low cost.

Other types of new media, such as mobile devices, are often used in educational projects for children and youth, aiming to empower them with their own means of media production and enabling them to produce content from their own perspectives.

Although some CSOs have been successfully using new media, a strengthened network would allow a better share of information and offer capacity building activities. Moreover, as previously mentioned, CSOs often lack the knowledge to improve their use of new media, that is, how to better promote their projects and engage other users in addressing child rights issues. Thus, an institutionalised child rights network could also address these needs, while establishing connections with various media outlets.

SUCCESSFUL INITIATIVES: NEW MEDIA AND CHILD RIGHTS

- Criar Brasil's programme Radiotube[35] is a well-known example facilitating network development and media production. It is an online community of media producers, especially in radio, who share and promote their own content. Through Radiotube, Criar Brasil also promotes capacity building activities, mostly with children, youth and young adults. These activities result in a diverse range of materials, from radio to text and audiovisuals that are then posted on the network website.

- Viva Favela[36] is a similar project created by Viva Rio, open to anyone to post content – text, audio or audiovisual – and share it with this online community of citizen media producers on their website. The content is often directed or produced by Brazilian citizens that live in low-income communities, such as favelas, and thus human rights issues are frequently addressed.

- Redes de Desenvolvimento da Maré[37] and Observatório de Favelas[38] both have well-known websites, where public and media professionals can find a variety of information on human rights issues and a list of contacts for consultation. As expressed during a media focus group organised by Internews Europe, these sites are often used by the media in search of expert opinions on human rights.

- Cipó in Salvador, Bahia, makes very successful use of new media, primarily through Facebook and Twitter to address child rights.

- The Safernet[39] website is highlighted as a reference for discussions of child safety on the Internet.

35   See http://www.radiotube.org.br/ (accessed 23 December, 2013).
36   See http://vivafavela.com.br/ (accessed 23 December, 2013).
37   See http://redesdamare.org.br/ (accessed 23 December, 2013).
38   See http://observatoriodefavelas.org.br/ (accessed 23 December, 2013).
39   See http://www.safernet.org.br/site/ (accessed 23 December, 2013).

CIVIL SOCIETY AND MEDIA NETWORKS: DISPELLING DISTRUST

Despite past and current initiatives that have tried to connect the media and child rights CSOs, advocates stated that the relationship remains permeated by distrust. Organisations such as ANDI, Redes de Desenvolvimento da Maré, Criar Brasil and CEDECA have worked to engage CSOs and the media, but they have not established a network of all child rights entities described as necessary.

There are many CSOs covering different aspects of child rights – for example, in relation to legislation, both the Children and Adolescent Center of Defense (CEDECA), as well Criar Brasil, direct their programmes at youth in conflict with the law, and street children. However there is a need for a network with a broader framework that can more effectively support and promote a variety of causes. Such a network will help overcome the traditional lack of interest in child rights issues on the part of the media, and galvanise a call for action.

The lack of an ongoing dialogue with CSOs has been a great impediment to the quality of child rights content produced by media outlets and a greater engagement on their behalf. A joint monitoring system of the quality of media content that adheres to agreed guidelines could be a fundamental initiative to strengthen collaboration on child rights coverage. However, CSOs stressed that for monitoring to be effective, the media would have to be fully engaged and willing to discuss that need for improvement.

Including children's perspectives and participation in child rights activities would require media outlets to gain a thorough understanding of child rights issues, as well as the importance of engaging children and adolescents in content produced. Thus, training activities could be very helpful to sensitise journalists about the importance of integrating children's voices. Moreover, the content produced by CSOs working toward children's empowerment through media needs to be shared and broadcast across traditional media outlets. Finally, CSOs need adequate training to produce better content that can then be released on media platforms.

GENERATING CHILD RIGHTS COVERAGE: CIVIL SOCIETY KEY MOMENTS

Events centered on child rights offer great opportunities to amplify child and advocates' voices, and engage civil society in a dialogue. However, these occasions lack wide public participation and often involve small demonstrations, panel discussions and workshops. The most prominent ones include the Children and Adolescents Statute (ECA) Anniversary, celebrated on 13 July; World Day against Child Labour, held on 12 June; National Day against Sexual Exploitation of Children and Adolescents, held on 18 May; Anu Award of Central Única das Favelas (Cufa);[40] and the Tim Lopes Award and Vladimir Herzog Award targeted at journalists.

CHALLENGES AND OPPORTUNITIES: CSOS AND MEDIA ACTIVITIES

CSOs expressed a great interest in participating in projects to improve media coverage of child rights. However, a possible challenge may be the constrained relations CSOs have with media outlets.

Furthermore, CSOs pointed out that there is an additional need to engage government service providers including public school systems, child health services, and child rights agencies in training and capacity building activities. CSOs recommended government partnership in social and educational projects and have themselves taken this approach, noting that Rede's project Criança Petrobrás uses a similar methodology by implementing cultural and education activities within public schools.

The most pressing public debate on child rights issues deals with lowering the age for criminal responsibility as a crime prevention measure, while the CSO community has strongly been resisting what they regard as a setback for child rights. The lack of a more detailed discourse by the media on the matter has hindered the search for adequate solutions. Another significant current debate is challenging the existing TV rating system before the Supreme Court, whereby large media outlets claim

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40   See http://www.premioanu.com.br/ (accessed 23 December, 2013).

Simone Nasimento (centre), a young journalist from Brazil, goes online at an adolescent space set up for youth delegates during World Congress III against Sexual Exploitation of Children and Adolescents in Rio de Janeiro, accompanied by youth chaperones from India and Serbia. © UNICEF / PIROZZI

the law is unconstitutional;[41] specifically that content regulation limits freedom of speech. On the other hand, advocates argue that the TV rating system is important to prevent child and youth exposure to inappropriate content.

However, merely creating legal landmarks is not sufficient – their implementation is found to be the greatest challenge. For instance, although the ECA is a consolidated policy and clearly states that all children between the ages of 4-17 must be enrolled in school, there are 3.6 million children out of school in Brazil, representing 8% of this age group.[42] Child labour, although clearly prohibited in Brazil, is a widespread phenomenon, especially in the agricultural production sector and as domestic workers in the north and northeast, and in small

towns. Sexual exploitation also remains problematic, with sexual tourism and prostitution primarily in the northeast.[43] Finally, in the urban poor communities commonly known as favelas where governmental policies have been known to fail, children are often involved in the drug trade and caught in the crossfire during shootings between gangs or with the police. Internews Europe proposes to address these challenges through projects focusing on and enhancing media collaboration, directly supporting CSOs in better presenting media content, recognising and awarding successful initiatives on promoting child rights, and supporting children and youth to use media to better express and advocate from their own perspectives.

41   Macedo, A. R. and Haja, L. 'STF poderá tornar ineficaz classificação indicativa na TV, alerta ministério', *Câmara Notícias*, 8 December, 2011. Available at: http://bit.ly/1dpqSyh (accessed 19 December, 2013).

42   Rodrigues, Cintía. 'Brasil tem 3,6 milhões de crianças e adolescentes fora da escola em 2011', March 6, 2013. Available at http://bit.ly/19Vs222 (accessed 19 December, 2013).

43   'Turismo sexual estimula exploração sexual infantil no Brasil', BBC Brasil, 30 July, 2010. Available at: http://bbc.in/IYTS72 (accessed 19 December, 2013).

Youth delegate Mopoti Nqabeni, 15, from Lesotho, attends World Congress III against Sexual Exploitation of Children and Adolescents in Rio de Janeiro. © UNICEF / PIROZZI

AMPLIFYING THE VOICES OF CHILDREN AND YOUTH

Amplifying advocates' voices, and those of children and youth, would do much to reduce child rights violations, as CSOs have the most updated information on violations and problem areas. It would provide CSOs the opportunity to communicate well on issues that the media and government tend to ignore or under-emphasise. Moreover, supporting a network connecting the media and CSOs would help strengthen advocates' voices while improving public discourses and policy development. This in turn would improve the exchange of information and knowledge on child rights, include children and youth's perspectives in policy-making and in the design and implementation of activities on child rights, improve the dialogue between the media and CSOs, and possibly support a more qualified approach to the coverage of child rights by the media.

Although advocates use diverse means of traditional media to support child rights advocacy, their access remains limited and there is still a poor quality of media content and approach to covering child rights issues. Boosting the capacity of media experts and CSOs to cover child rights issues and improve cotent calls for a strong relationship between communities, advocates, media outlets and public services.

As a strong correlation was found between public policy debates and topics on child rights, there is a great need to work to generate more feature and editorial coverage of policy issues, and elevate the conversation to a main topic of the media's focus. Furthermore, encouraging the continued use of commemorative days, events and reports is a useful tactic for higher news coverage on child rights, as they are a tool to raise awareness of key issues, providing needed news hooks that can justify coverage.

The creation of a CSO network would help strengthen and redefine the relationship of CSOs and the media, as well as support advocates to share their news with journalists, thus giving them more reasons to cover child rights issues.

2 INDIA:
THE COMPLEX CHALLENGE OF CHILD RIGHTS REPORTING

India is home to 17% of the world's children, and has the world's largest child population.[44] Despite this, India's children are often neglected and their rights ignored. Of the 430 million children in India,[45] an estimated 55% – a staggering 236.5 million – currently experience rights violations.

India's media landscape, one of the oldest and largest in the world, is vast, fragmented, complex and highly diverse – a natural result of the country's geographical size, huge population and numerous languages. And with over 3 million non-governmental organisations (NGOs), India also has one of the world's largest NGO sectors. The majority of these, child rights advocates among them, view media as extremely important and powerful in achieving the civil society goals of ensuring child rights and exerting pressure to hold government accountable for them. Yet, child rights advocates express strong concerns on what they see as India's media consistently failing to play its part in this effort. The media is repeatedly criticised for its lack of adequate, balanced coverage on child-related issues, and the absence of children's voices in news reporting.

GOVERNMENT CHILD RIGHTS POLICY AND PRACTICE

There are several progressive pieces of legislation, policies and programmes in India for safeguarding the rights of children. However, government-run programme implementation and legislative enforcement is extremely poor – one reason is the low budgetary investment by the government in the child sector at less than 6% of the total national budget. The budgets allocated are far too low to fulfil

all programmatic requirements, leading to problems such as inadequate staff and material resources, low-quality training, poor documentation etc. in all government-run child initiatives. [46]

The condition of children in India remains dismal, with unmet targets or worsening trends noted for nearly all child rights indicators; the statistics are particularly appalling in the areas of child nutrition and child protection.[47] Current child-related policy debates in India are noted to mainly revolve around The Juvenile Justice Act – revisiting the legal age definition of a juvenile, and the proposed amendments to the existing Child Labour (Prohibition and Regulation) Act – the debate around broadening the legal definition of what constitutes child labour in India.

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44 Children in India 2012 – A Statistical Appraisal by the Ministry of Statistics and Programme Implementation, MoSPI.

45 Census of India, 2011.

46 Neeti Daftari (2013). *Status Report on Child Rights in India: An Overview of the Past Decade,* Child Rights and You (CRY).

47 Ibid.

THE UN CONVENTION ON THE RIGHTS OF THE CHILD: A 'HURDLE' FOR INDIAN POLICY MAKERS?

A story in the *Times of India, 2 December, 2013*, describes how the Cabinet "readies to treat 16-plus in heinous crimes as adults".

…the Supreme Court recently said it would examine whether juvenility be considered on a case to case basis, keeping in view the maturity of the offender and the heinousness of the crime. One of the significant hurdles to the decision was that India is a signatory to the UN convention on child rights. However, the ministry plans to use the word "juvenile" instead of child for the purpose of this law to ensure that those who are in conflict with the law and are found guilty of rare, brutal crimes are treated differently.[48]

(HIMANSHI DHAWAN)

Families take refuge on an embankment where people displaced by flooding have established temporary shelters, in Supaul District, Bihar, India, 2008.
© UNICEF / ADAM FERGUSON

48   http://m.timesofindia.com/india/Cabinet-readies-to-treat-16-plus-in-heinous-crimes-as-adults/articleshow/26707294.cms

I. THE INDIAN MEDIA LANDSCAPE

Table 1 presents an overview of Indian media platforms and consumers. However, this landscape is undergoing changes and a closer, more in-depth analysis provides some interesting insights.

Table 1: Indian media and access to consumers

Media platform	Consumers in India (millions)	% Compound Annual Growth Rate (CAGR)[49]	Media credibility ranking[50]
Mobile (subscribers)	900[51]	n.a.	n.a.
Television (viewers)	730[52]	5.2	2
Print (readers)	353[53]	0.8	1
Radio (listeners)	159[54]	1.9	3
Internet (users)	124[55]	24.2	4

49   Indian Readership Survey (IRS) Q4, 2012.

50   FICCI-KPMG Report, 2012.

51   Telecom Regulatory Authority of India (TRAI) Annual Report 2011-12.

52   FICCI-KPMG Report, 2013, based upon Census of India, 2011.

53   Indian Readership Survey (IRS) Q4, 2012

54   Indian Readership Survey (IRS) Q4, 2012.

55   comScore, July 2012. The total number of Internet users across surveys and reports varied significantly from 44.5 million to 176 million. However, comScore was unanimously cited by social media experts as the most reliable source, and as an internationally accepted one.

Vandana Dube, manager of radio station Dharkan 107.8, plays a tape-recorded drama about institutional delivery for an audience of women and children in the Adivasi (tribal) village of Patara, near Shivpuri, India. © UNICEF / TOM PIETRASIK

Among traditional media, television is the largest and most popular, with approximately two in three households in the country owning a TV. Print media, opposing the global trend, continues to grow in India, coming second to TV but with only about half the number of consumers. Conventional wisdom suggests that radio, given its wider accessibility and lower costs, would be one of the more dominant media in the country. However, policy and regulatory issues and the strong foothold of the visual medium in India has resulted in radio having only a relatively low user base, with a strong likelihood of being relegated to the least popular media platform in the coming years. Moreover, in India, only All India Radio (AIR), the state-owned radio, is allowed to broadcast news bulletins, though guidelines cleared by the Information and Broadcasting Ministry in 2011 now permit private radio channels and community radio to broadcast news bulletins from AIR in an unedited format.

Within TV, general entertainment is the most watched genre, whereas news forms a mere fraction of overall viewership. Additionally, news viewership has faced a decline over the past year, with English-language channels declining most. Within print, Hindi and vernacular newspapers together dominate circulation and readership, while English-language dailies continue to dominate advertising revenues.

REGIONALISATION OF MEDIA

In both television and print, regional media outlets have gained in popularity in recent years, with some of the southern states forming the largest regional media markets in the country. According to industry sources, there is likely to be further emphasis and growth in the regional media market which will continue to gather momentum, as the prospect of less competition, large unexplored territories and an available audience makes these markets especially attractive. Through interviews and discussions conducted with media and sector experts, it has also become clear that regional outlets are more likely to be keen on, as well as benefited by, external inputs,

Kannyasree Das (13) and Ipshita Baidya (13) producing radio stories for Jadavpur University's radio station, Radio Ju, about the challenges of the urban environment for students. UNICEF provided media professionals to train the children in journalism and radio production techniques. © UNICEF / GRAHAM CROUCH

technical expertise and resources. This is attributed to the smaller scale of their operations, often inadequately trained journalists, and frequently insufficient resources. This presents a good opportunity for media development organisations to train journalists on crucial issues such as child rights

NEW MEDIA: OUTPACING THE OLD

New media are the fastest growing in India, encompassing the Internet, social media and mobile. In fact, mobile, with over 900 million subscribers, can lay claim to being the largest medium in the country, having overtaken all other forms of media through a growth of over 800% since 2006.[56] Mobile devices are getting cheaper, access easier and time spent using them longer, leading to significant shifts in content consumption habits of large sections of the Indian populace. Many mobile device users are at the bottom of the socio-economic pyramid. A 2010 United Nations report noted that more Indians

have access to a mobile phone than to a toilet. Given the rising demand for network, access and services, it is believed that 90% of the total population will have mobile coverage by 2015 and that mobile subscriptions will exceed 1.2 billion by 2016. [57]

The Internet and social media currently have a relatively low user base, skewed towards the young, urban, English-speaking middle class. However, here too the user base is growing fast. Within new media, websites offering extensive platforms for user-generated content (UGC) are among the most popular in India. Facebook, the leading social media website, is accessed by 97% of all social media users in India.[58] Between November 2009 and March 2011, unique visitors to Facebook grew from 11.2 to 31.6 million.[59] As of March 2013, Facebook claims a base of 78 million monthly active users in India. This

56 *Mapping Digital Media: India,* Open Society Foundation, 2012.

57 *Use of mobile phones for social and behavior change,* Digital Empowerment Foundation and UNICEF, 2013.

58 *Social Media in India Report 2012,* Internet and Mobile Association of India (IAMAI) and Indian Market Research Bureau (IMRB).

59 Mapping Digital Media: India, Open Society Foundation, 2012.

Putul Sharma (18, left) and Dipak Kumar Jha (17) at Khidderpur Child Protection Centre in Kolkata, West Bengal, writing stories and producing one-minute documentary dramas about life in slum areas, escaping poverty and helping others. UNICEF is working with local NGO Sanlaap, providing media professionals to train the children in journalism and video techniques.
© UNICEF / GRAHAM CROUCH

is an astounding 50% increase over the user base of March 2012.[60] With over 78 million social network surfers, a number rapidly growing, this medium will become extremely hard to ignore in the near future. Moreover, a significant increase is predicted not only in user numbers but also in inclusion across classes, particularly because of growing Internet connectivity through mobile phones whose penetration includes the poor in remote rural areas. The top social media websites accessed in descending order are Facebook, Google Plus, Linkedin, Twitter, Orkut and Ibibo.[61] Both Facebook and Twitter are also very popular with decision-makers, policy-influencers and CSO advocates.

The audience for online news has also shown phenomenal growth in recent years, though the overall pattern of online news themes continues to be determined by traditional news outlets. In terms of reliability as an information medium, however,

the Internet is at the bottom of the list, while print is perceived as most credible. Training for advocacy CSOs, online reporters and citizen journalists on how best to use social media (mainly Facebook, Twitter and YouTube) to broadcast information in the form of infographics, informative photographs, short videos, interactive discussions etc. and ensure that only highly credible content is uploaded, could possibly help raise the status and credibility of social media in India.

ADVERTISING: CALLING THE SHOTS

An important point to note in understanding the functioning of India's news media is that it is mainly financed by advertising; and in this advertising-driven age, audience numbers hold the key. This, as reported by numerous Indian journalists, editors and CSO staff interviewed during our research, has resulted in a near uniform preference for sensational treatment of all news items and the practice of consistent 'breaking news' in Indian news

60 http://www.livemint.com/Consumer/NwNFvLukHEbgbVQH9Dd7UK/ India-Brazil-and-mobile-users-lift-Facebook-count-to-115-b.html (accessed 13 December, 2013).

61 *Social Media in India Report, 2012,* IAMAI and IMRB.

Children in India with messages on child rights. © ADITYA BAJAJ / CONCERN INDIA FOUNDATION

broadcasting. Where day-to-day news coverage is concerned, a lack of regard for good-quality investigative journalism or follow-up has become the norm.

Moreover, in India there is currently a transformation taking place as print and broadcast media organisations struggle to deal with rising costs and new restrictive regulations on advertising time. Recent newspaper reports have indicated redundancies, closures and sell-offs within several news organisations, pointing to leaner newsrooms and a long-term strategy led by digital and mobile platforms. With a growing digital and Internet-savvy audience, and advertising spends shifting from television or print to digital and social media, many in the media believe that digital media will be the future. This could potentially open up niche content areas online, wherein news outlets looking at 'sticky' web content may become more interested in the inclusion of high-quality child-rights related or child-produced content created in an online format.

CHILDREN'S VOICES ARE ABSENT

Children are not considered a key audience segment in either news broadcasting or print. News targeted at children is confined to periodical children's supplements or pull-outs carried by some newspapers. But these children's supplements are targeted at, and accessed by, more privileged sections of society, with only limited access in rural areas. They also tend to have an entertainment or higher education focus rather than a focus on child issues or child rights. In line with this, Indian Readership Survey data highlights the fact that newspaper reading is least frequent among 12-15-year olds, with 59% of literate children not reading newspapers. Since reading habits are formed in the early years, the FICCI-KPMG 2013 report points out that failing to engage the child and youth population could be a potential threat to the print industry, as there exists a very real possibility of this section of the Indian reader base shifting to new and social media for their news and views. Thus, it seems that if the print industry is to survive in the long term, it would become essential for print publications to target news content at the literate child and youth section, possibly through an increase in child-produced and child-oriented news content in their publications.

KEY FINDINGS FROM INTERNEWS EUROPE'S STUDY[62] ANALYSING CHILD RIGHTS CONTENT ACROSS PRINT, TELEVISION, RADIO AND SOCIAL MEDIA

- Of the three countries in our study, the greatest quantity of news items on child rights was found in India. The aggregate sample collected was heavily weighted to print, with 804 print news items, 120 TV news items, and 9 radio news items.

- News coverage accounted for 79% (86) of the 109 news items sample pulled for careful review, while features and bulletins each accounted for roughly 10% of the sample. There was only one editorial in the entire sample.

- The greatest percentages of stories were about child education (24%), child health/nutrition (20%), physical or sexual abuse of children (17%), and child labour (10%). There were no stories about inheritance, homelessness, sexuality/sex education, or child rights.

- Of 11 feature news items, 46% were about child health/child nutrition and 27% about parenting.

- Television channels showed a particular interest in covering physical and sexual abuse cases (39%).

- Only 3% (3) news items had a negative or anti-child slant, while 51% (56) of the news items were positive/pro-child and 46% (50) were neutral. The majority of negative quotes were from teachers (9%) and the police (8%).

- 38% of news items stereotyped children as hopeless, helpless victims, while 13% of news items were sensationalised.

- The areas of least compliance with the nine-point scale of measurements, and with the greatest need for improvement include: quoting children (8%), independently verifying facts with children (14%), including helpful

- information about prevention/help/support (15%), and presenting the story in a broader context of child rights issues.

- Only about 25% of the sample focused on public policy issues as a main or secondary topic.

- No news item in the randomly selected sample contained child/youth-developed content.

- The majority of quotes in news items or radio news programmes, where applicable, were attributed to policy-makers (27%) and child advocates (21%).

- On a nine-point scale, TV coverage received the lowest quality score at 2.6; radio was the median at 3; print coverage received the greatest quality score at 3.7. All quality scores were lower than the median of 4.5, leaving considerable room for improvement in the way child rights stories are covered.

- 98% of the social media conversation was on Twitter.

- Online traffic was predominantly in English.

- There was a distinct regional difference in the social media conversations. After English-language news channels, Marathi news channels and newspapers dominated social media traffic rather than those in the national language, Hindi. The level of engagement, opinion and sentiment expressed, however, was much lower than for English-language counterparts.

- Keywords related to a selected child rights violation incident had thousands of mentions. However, there were very few mentions of the selected child rights policy issue. Those discussing the incident and policy were angry at the perpetrator and the system in general.

- Select news outlets are voices of authority on Twitter and are key influencers. Of the top five key influencers in English, one is a news outlet, one is an NGO and three are individual personalities. All key influencers in the Hindi and Marathi language are media organisations; a preliminary search was unable to identify any individuals or NGOs serving as influencers.

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62 *Missed opportunities: How media in India, Kenya and Brazil present child rights*, Douglas Gould and Company (DG&Co.), 2013.

Rajatava Halder (13) interviews a video store owner about how loud he plays music at his stall, and the effect of this on nearby students at the Jadavpur University, Kolkata, as part of a UNICEF-backed programme providing media professionals to train young people in journalism and radio production techniques. © UNICEF / GRAHAM CROUCH

A MULTIMEDIA APPROACH TO PROTECTING CHILD RIGHTS

Print media, with a current moderate user-base, and social media, with a current low user-base, show the highest potential for consumption growth and sector expansion in the near future. Social media is already very popular among youth, NGOs, rights-based advocates, journalists and influential decision-makers – all key child rights stakeholders. Therefore, print and social media present opportunities for optimising such growth by ensuring active and quality inclusion of child voices, child-produced content and the involvement of various stakeholders in the new expanded media space that opens up.

Further, because of its wide reach, the mobile platform opens up innumerable opportunities. An innovative concept in this arena is the 'mobile radio social network' developed by an Indian social tech company to create a voice-based social media platform for society's economically most disadvantaged segment: the rural poor. This platform uses simple technology and takes advantage of the widespread availability of mobile phones, even in rural areas, to create a space for sharing news and information. Through an intelligent IVR (interactive voice response) system that allows people to call into a number and leave a message about their community, or listen to messages left by others, the Mobile Vaani (www.gramvaani.org) is the rural poor's Facebook and Twitter. It may be worthwhile to consider expanding and disseminating the use of such innovative methods that combine extensive mobile reach with other traditional and new media forms to reach a wider public through well-planned and interactive training.

HARNESSING MEDIA TECHNOLOGIES FOR CHANGE

Many major television news channels have recognised the importance of social media for engaging young audiences. Leading television anchors such as Rajdeep Sardesai of CNN-IBN and Barkha Dutt of NDTV 24x7 are able to leverage attention for their daily programmes through their 800,000 followers on Twitter.[63]

Mother and Child Tracking System (MCTS), a Ministry of Health and Family Welfare initiative, is seen as an effective example of using mobiles for ensuring delivery of healthcare and immunisation services to pregnant women and children up to 5 years of age. The system employs mobile-based technology to communicate with grassroots level healthcare service providers, policy-makers and other stakeholders at different tiers of the healthcare delivery system. As another example, women victims in the Kutch district of Gujarat can access legal aid services to deal with mental stress and abusive situations through a helpline, 'Hello Sakhi', that allows the use of mobiles to register grievances so as to receive timely legal guidance.

The Mobile Vaani network, or the 'mobile radio social network', spans 15 districts in Jharkhand and over 30 community radio stations in seven other states. Its flagship roll-out was in Jharkhand, where it has more than 20,000 users who call over 2,000 times per day, discussing wide-ranging issues. The messages are moderated and posted, and where relevant, passed on to appropriate authorities. Villagers mainly use Mobile Vaani to report news but also post folk songs so they can be heard in other villages, as well as use it as a bulletin board for local job fairs and for sharing information on health or agriculture.[64]

GRINS (Gramin Radio Inter-Networking System), an initiative by Gram Vaani, is "an integrated software solution for running a community radio station that allows programme scheduling and play-out, full telephony and SMS integration, Internet streaming, content management and statistical analysis of play-out history". This helps community radio stations manage complex station management tasks in an easy and error-free manner. This low-cost radio management solution has successfully reached 2.5 million listeners in over six countries.[65]

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63   Irshad Daftari, Senior Product Manager, NDTV , 12 July, 2013.

64   http://www.gramvaani.org

65   http://www.gramvaani.org (accessed 13 December, 2013).

II. THE MEDIA PERSPECTIVE

The majority of media professionals interviewed as part of this study believe that well-strategised projects could bring about a welcome change in the way rights-based issues are covered by India's media, and a much-needed boost for the promotion of child rights. However, many signalled that a nationwide programme could be an extremely challenging effort considering the vastness and complex dynamics of the Indian media. Media sources indicated that success would depend not only on the kind of activities developed, but also to a large extent on the kind and level of specific partnerships formed and the credibility attached to these by the overall media.

> *"For both print and TV, there needs to be a 'news peg' — while no editor would want to be quoted stating this, the fact is that it is very difficult for media to move away from sensational incident-based reporting for fear of losing viewers. There is however a lot of scope to introduce trainings that focus on making such incident-based reporting more responsible and slightly more discursive."*
>
> DEPUTY EDITOR OF A LEADING ENGLISH LANGUAGE NEWS CHANNEL

Discussions and interviews revealed that the primary reason for media not being interested in child rights is the lack of consumer interest in child issues, and the perceived low political or economic significance of this theme. Low consumer interest translates into low circulation figures, which in turn translates to lower advertising revenues, exerting sufficient pressure on editors to neglect child rights in their coverage

Focus group participants as well as senior-level media professionals acknowledged that neither the media nor the general public are truly aware of the nuances of child rights and related laws or international conventions. Activities such as child rights-related trainings, fellowships, awards, festivals, seminars and a media-CSO network were perceived as having a stronger chance for success in implementation compared to mainstream media uptake of child voice and child-produced content. It was suggested that the activities be made accessible to a wide group of media outlets, both at the regional as well as national level, rather than linking with select media outlets to avoid detachment of rival outlets, and to ensure wider stakeholder reach.

CHILD-CENTRED NEWS AND CONTENT: LOW ON QUALITY, LOW ON QUANTITY

Most media professionals viewed child rights-based news coverage as sensational, urban-centric, and incident-orientated, often with a political spin. As stated by one freelance senior journalist and human rights author, "The trigger for a media story is always an incident and a tragedy serves as a strong trigger point; the bigger the tragedy, the more popular the news item." Incidents such as child rape or child sexual abuse are therefore readily picked up by the media. Long-form or discursive reporting is extremely rare; and solution-based reporting or coverage with regard to government efficiency, e.g. the rehabilitation of children freed in child labour raids, is sorely lacking. Reporters who put forth child rights-related stories are often discouraged by editors who advise them to focus instead on more sensational or glamorous stories. One of the focus group participants narrated an incident where an editor struck a deal with her stating, "For every 'X' number of stories of the newspaper's interest, you can include one of your 'bleeding hearts' stories."

Based on information provided by media professionals, there appear to be two key reasons for the low quantity and quality of child rights coverage. Firstly, there is no explicit demand from readers and viewers, therefore the media is reluctant to wade into this territory; as a direct result, there is no separate 'child beat' in the Indian media. This, in turn, leads to fewer stories and editors often assigning only junior reporters to cover child-related stories. Secondly, there is extremely limited media understanding of the child rights sector, as a result of which many reporters do not have the background knowledge or capacity to appropriately and comprehensively report on a child rights issue or violation that takes into account all relevant aspects of the situation; this leads to low-quality stories.

All media professionals interviewed by Internews Europe agreed that the Indian media currently offers little opportunity for children to speak for themselves on issues or policies that matter to them. Moreover, most media professionals are sceptical of including child voice in media because of the risks involved – there is fear of being pulled up by child rights activists or of legal prosecution by parents, in addition to the

A journalist taking notes. © INTERNEWS

low credibility of child quotes in media stories. In a similar vein, child-produced content in mainstream media is virtually non-existent, except in children's supplements in newspapers. However, there have been occasional spurts of child-produced content appearing in mainstream news and information media as a result of child media-based projects and campaign efforts led by large child rights NGOs.

Quality television programming presenting information on child rights and targeting children as its audience is extremely rare. Many general entertainment programmes engage child actors in soaps or in competitive reality shows, where numerous violations of child rights take place, including 'psychological abuse' and children being portrayed in an adult-like manner, dancing or mouthing dialogue considered inappropriate for their age. There are a few popular panel talk shows that have touched upon child rights issues but only a small percentage of the overall topics covered focus on child issues. There are also several popular children's channels in India. Most of these offer a

Rahul Goswami (21) filming at a shelter near the Khidderpur Child Protection Centre, Kolkata, India, in 2011. He wrote stories for the monthly newsletter, Youth Speak, and produced one-minute documentary dramas topics relevant to young people in the area. © UNICEF / GRAHAM CROUCH

mix of high-quality local and international content, including locally produced animation. Some of the locally produced mythic animation programmes are very popular.[66] But none of these channels present a focus on child rights issues, with the exception of one television series, which is the Hindi language adaptation of the popular American educational series *Sesame Street*.

Overall, in terms of production quality, Indian commercial television (particularly Hindi and English) has high production values, often using high-quality technical equipment and crew to create content. The content packaging, in terms of graphics and animations, is often of an international standard. Regional broadcast programming does not have the technical and post-production finesse of Hindi and English-language channels, but is still of reasonably high quality. However, public broadcaster Doordarshan continues to have content

and production values that are far behind most other contemporary channels. The state-owned All India Radio (AIR) broadcasts child programmes from all regional and local radio stations in various regional languages. These programmes include entertainment as well as child rights information. However, AIR lags behind private FM stations in terms of production quality and programming content.

SOCIAL MEDIA: ON THE RISE FOR RURAL YOUTH

Social media experts pointed out that the growing number of urban, middle-class youth Internet users are increasingly using the Internet and social media as a means of keeping abreast of the latest news and current affairs: often engaging in extensive debates on social and political issues on sites such as Facebook and Twitter. While many media professionals in the metropolitan cities of Delhi and Mumbai were sceptical about the scope of social media use in vernacular-language or rural settings, those in

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66 Rohn, Ulrike (2010). *Cultural Barriers to the success of foreign media content: Western media in China, India and Japan.*

Suraj Jha,17, a blind student at Jadavpur University, Kolkata, attends drama therapy classes that encourage communication with peers. WIth support from UNICEF he is learning to write and produce radio stories for the university radio station, Radio Ju.
© UNICEF / GRAHAM CROUCH

vernacular-language areas promptly pointed out that the popularity of social media has been on a constant rise in rural settings with many rural teenagers accessing social media, particularly Facebook, through mobile phones for sharing photographs, posts and displaying 'likes'. While the lack of English knowledge amongst many rural youth is a significant barrier, Avanindra Mishra, head of the Hindi web portal Naya India, says, "It is an urban myth that rural youth do not have access to the Internet; with the growing popularity of mobile phones, many educated rural teenagers, particularly boys, are learning to use tools such as Google Translate and can now access and read articles that they feel are relevant or interesting." With increasing mobility and social networking offered by operators, it's expected that more young users will get onto social networks and the Internet.[67]

67   Irshad Daftari, Senior Product Manager, NDTV. Personal Interview (7 September, 2013).

HOW WELL DOES INDIA'S MEDIA EMBRACE CHILD RIGHTS?

Media guidelines and monitoring: A few media guidelines for child rights reporting already exist in India; some of these are court imposed, while others have been developed through a CSO-government partnership. However, the media sector appears to be largely ignorant of the existence of these guideline documents. Most reporters are informed of the stipulations on child coverage by editors when they file stories that violate set norms, rather than through training. While the common, court-imposed norms are largely followed by the big media houses, occasional slips occur; reporters in rural areas are less aware about these child coverage regulations. Regulatory/watchdog media bodies are present in India, both for print as well as television, but none of these has expressed an interest or has the capacity to effectively monitor child rights coverage.

Training: In-house training by media houses is extremely rare. However, NGOs and other organisations have conducted training workshops

Ipshita Baidya (13), Nabanita Das (13), and Kannyashree Das (13) interview a student at a school near Jadavpur University, Kolkata. They are writing and producing radio stories for the university radio station, Radio Ju, following UNICEF-sponsored training for children keen to learn journalism and radio production techniques. © GRAHAM CROUCH / UNICEF

for journalists that include child rights sensitisation in media reporting, with many of these trainings having included field visits to help journalists get first-hand information and understanding of child rights situations/concerns. Nearly all editors/media owners contacted by Internews Europe said that their outlet would be open to training. However they stated that reporters, particularly from urban areas, are usually not keen on attending training as they often believe that they do not need it. Often it is only junior reporters who agree to undergo training, unless the trainers are well-known experts or if the training includes an outstation trip – typically referred to by the media as a 'junket trip'.[68] According to media experts, short-duration, theme-based media training is most likely to get an editor's interest; for training of longer duration, a field visit was noted to be particularly helpful in raising the awareness and interest of participant reporters.

Further, focus group participants revealed that editors often assign only female journalists to cover child issues as it is perceived to fall under the 'soft issues' category, revealing the gender insensitive nature of the Indian media sector. Journalists emphasised that when implementing a sensitisation training programme on child reporting, the programme should encourage editors to include an equal number of male and female journalists in order to bring a modern, gender-aware approach to reporting child rights stories.

The current economic meltdown of the Indian media sector, particularly the English medium, has resulted in a faster-than-predicted move into the online domain, with print or TV journalists being made to double up as online reporters who are not trained to make such a shift. The present situation therefore opens up a crucial space for trainings on online media reporting.

68   Vijai Trivedi, National Editor, *Rajasthan Patrika*. Personal interview (20 August, 2013); Anindo Dey, Assistant Editor, *Times of India*. Personal interview (17 August, 2013).

"In the current desperate scenario, online news has suddenly become the focus of attention. With increasing layoffs and recruitments being tightly controlled, a number of print and especially TV journalists are doubling up as online reporters. The skills required for an online journalist are very different from those required for print or TV; for instance, the story structure is shorter, the style of writing, referencing, and visuals are different with additional online links to be provided etc. Journalists are never, ever provided any trainings when making a shift to online reporting. Editors expect their employees to have these skills or else they could be out of a job."

ASHISH MISHRA, SENIOR SPECIAL CORRESPONDENT, FORBES INDIA

Mass communication courses: A large number of universities offer mass communication courses in India. Of these, only the Asian College of Journalism in Chennai has a child rights elective course, which was initiated recently in partnership with UNICEF. Many leading institutes have modules on 'media and law', 'development and communication' etc. that incorporate coverage on child rights issues, but at a very basic level. Within such institutes, experts suggested that it would be far more efficient and practical to collaborate on furthering the focus on child rights issues through extension of existing courses rather than developing an entire new course. Most also felt that there was tremendous scope to introduce a new course on child rights in mass communication departments/colleges where no such human rights/development course existed. Additionally, media professionals suggested the creation of an online course module on child rights reporting for journalists who may not have the access, time, or inclination to attend on-site training or courses.

Media literacy: Media literacy workshops and programmes have been conducted in schools across various states in India through projects by the government, NGOs, independent organisations or the schools themselves.

Awards: There is no specific award for quality child rights coverage in India. Journalists believe that a well-publicised award for quality media coverage on child rights issues would be likely to draw the attention of reporters towards child issues, motivating them to increase the quantity and quality of such coverage.

THE MEDIA, CIVIL SOCIETY AND GOVERNMENT: UNEASY BEDFELLOWS

Discussions on media networking with CSOs revealed a picture of extreme and deep-rooted media mistrust of CSOs. Nearly all the journalists and editors contacted believed CSOs rarely engaged in genuine sensitisation on rights-based issues through media, and that they were biased sources with questionable agendas who tend to access the media for self-indulgent public relations (PR) exercises. While media representatives stated they had easy access to CSOs as sources whenever required, large, well-established CSOs were viewed as particularly difficult to partner with, as they are often unresponsive to journalist requests for quotes or specific information. Media professionals identified several specific areas of concern in the quality of communication material developed by CSOs for sharing with the media. These include for instance, overly self-serving press releases, inadequate sample sizes, verbose and jargon-laden content, excessive delay in providing quotes etc. – issues that could possibly be addressed through communication training for CSOs.

An active media-CSO networking platform was viewed as beneficial as it could help increase tip-offs for story ideas and provide a larger range of advocacy voices as sources, or as panel guests. A good media-CSO network was also seen as a possible route to get better access to affected families or communities. During discussions, both print and television reporters felt that currently, child rights advocate voices used by media are only from select large NGOs or from statutory bodies such as the National Commission for Protection of Child Rights (NCPCR). They believed that smaller grassroots NGO advocates are often ignored for quotes, as they are less visible (because of limited networking resources) and lack the credibility of larger organisations. However, they felt these smaller organisations have the most accurate understanding of on-ground situations and can bring real issues to the fore.

Suraj Prasad (18), Rahul Goswami (21), and Ajay Thakur (17) film on location near the Khidderpur Child Protection Centre, Kolkata. UNICEF funds work through local NGO Sanlaap to provide professional media training for young people interested in learning journalism and video techniques. © GRAHAM CROUCH / UNICEF

Media stated that access to key, central government sources in Delhi is extremely difficult. However, the ease and quality of access to state government sources varies across states; it also depends largely on the networking capacity of individual reporters. Further, the media shared that most government databases are outdated – data on child-related issues, in particular, are scattered and incomplete, which was cited as a big drawback when using government sources.

At the same time, government officials said that media understanding of government functioning was very poor. There was also frequent misquoting of interviews given by government officials. As suggested by interviewees, key media-related activity requirements within this space include supporting the dissemination of information through mainstream media on how one can access government child-related schemes and services, as well as organising theme-based government-media interfaces to better inform the media on government functioning within the child sector.

CHALLENGES AND OPPORTUNITIES: ENGAGING THE MEDIA ON CHILD RIGHTS

The vast and fragmented nature of India's media, the volatility in the media market and the sheer number of media houses and media activities (at national and state level) make it an extremely complex sector to navigate. Some of the key challenges include countering the pervasive lack of media interest in child issues, and devising appropriate 'partnership' approaches that ensure wide media reach and buy-in while at the same time catering to the need for 'exclusive' media content. And where existing or potential opportunities are concerned, the media named a few literature festivals, certain national child-focus days etc. that could provide a temporary opening to raise the level of child rights coverage in India.

CHILD RIGHTS IN THE SPOTLIGHT: THE POWER OF STRONG MEDIA INITIATIVES

A project called 'Media Clubs', launched in 2009 and run by the Central Institute of Educational Technology (CIET) and National Council of Educational Research and Training (NCERT) promotes media literacy in schools in India. Through this project, several schools in various Indian states have set up clubs to promote an understanding of the importance of media, and the effects of mass media on children and on society. They also help children develop skills to deconstruct media messages and produce creative media messages.[69]

Rajasthan Patrika (RP), a leading Hindi newspaper, has been engaged with the issue of child education since 2010. With strong civil society engagement, the campaign is very structured and features in all editions of RP. During the campaign, several hundred articles appeared in RP on the issue, and after three years of sustained coverage, RP is now filing a Public Interest Litigation (PIL) on the issue of lack of enforcement of aspects of the Right to Education Act. It has also engaged in extensive grassroots outreach related to child education, including child enrolment in schools. Shipra Mathur, Editor and Media Action Head, RP, states, "We believe that there is no point in playing just the role of supplier of news; once we pick up an issue – then it becomes our own and we take it on to its end."

News portals and news blogs such as India Together,[70] Youth ki Awaaz,[71] and Kafila[72] provide ample coverage of child issues. India Together is a socially conscious news portal which has some of India's leading development authors as contributors, besides aggregating news. Youth ki Awaaz (targeted at youth) is an online and mobile news platform where India's youth come together to discuss issues that concern them. Typically contributors are young adults themselves. Finally, Kafila (targeted at influencers and policy-makers) is a news blog with commentaries and articles from activists, authors, academics and journalists, often engaging in long, well-analysed arguments.[73]

CNN-IBN, a leading English news channel, ran a citizen journalism campaign on child rights, titled No country for children, from August-October 2013 on its Citizen Journalist (CJ) Show.[74] As part of this campaign, CNN-IBN engaged citizen journalists to cover child rights issues in India. These mainly included child physical and sexual abuse, child malnutrition, child labour and Right to Education issues.

In 2011 NDTV launched its Support My School campaign.[75] This was in support of the right to education with a view to ensuring better access to sanitation, water, playing facilities, libraries, computer centres and a more welcoming and learning environment in schools, with successful post-campaign results noted in over 100 schools across 10 states in India.

The *Newspaper in Education* (NiE) was launched by the *Times of India* group in 1985 and is a special edition student newspaper containing articles relevant to children, some written and edited by children themselves. It reaches 2,000 schools across India and claims to have a student membership of over 5 million.

Rajasthan Patrika's *Chotu Motu*, a special fortnightly magazine for children, is currently helping children develop child manifestos in the run up to the 2014 general elections. The manifestos will be published in this popular magazine.[76]

The Indian Hindi language adaptation of Sesame Street, called Galli Galli Sim Sim (GGSS), was introduced in India in 2006, and is aired on Cartoon Network, POGO and Doordarshan. This show is popular with young children and focuses on children's issues such as child disability, girls' education, health, nutrition etc. Sesame Workshop India, the non-profit educational organisation behind GGSS, also engages in community outreach work with children.[77]

In the area of children's films, a small autonomous body, Children's Film Society India – under

69 http://ciet.nic.in/MediaClub/about_media_clubs.html (accessed 13 December, 2013).

70 http://www.indiatogether.org/ (accessed 13 December, 2013).

71 http://www.youthkiawaaz.com/ (accessed 13 December, 2013).

72 http://kafila.org/ (accessed 13 December, 2013).

73 Irshad Daftari, Senior Product Manager, NDTV. Personal interview (11 August, 2013).

74 http://cj.ibnlive.in.com/cj-campaign-no-country-for-children/9769/ (accessed 13 December, 2013).

75 http://www.ndtv.com/micro/supportmyschool/aboutthecampaign.aspx (accessed on 13 December, 2013).

76 Shipra Mathur, Editor and Head – Media Action Group, Rajasthan Patrika. Personal interview (17 August, 2013).

77 http://www.sesameworkshopindia.org/ (accessed 13 December, 2013).

Young journalism students Ipshita Baidya, Kannyasree Das, Nabanita Das and Rajatava Halder (all aged 13) attend training sessions at Jadavpur University, Kolkata, to learn to write and produce radio stories on issues relevant to young people. © GRAHAM CROUCH / UNICEF

the Ministry of Information and Broadcasting, Government of India, with the slogan 'promoting every child's right to entertainment' – produces children's feature films, shorts, animations, television episodes in various Indian languages, and documentaries.[78] These are sometimes aired on Doordarshan and some include child rights themes.

Satyamev Jayate was a show on Star Network, hosted by the popular actor Amir Khan in 2012. It was also aired on the state-owned Doordarshan's DD National channel. Two of the 14 episodes focussed on child rights issues namely, female foeticide and child sexual abuse. This was a very popular show with the masses that helped raise awareness of child rights. However, there is unlikely to be a second season of this show.

III. THE CIVIL SOCIETY PERSPECTIVE

There is unanimous agreement among CSOs and child rights advocates in India that media is an extremely important and powerful stakeholder in enhancing the public's child rights awareness, and in providing the push for policy and legislative changes. But Indian NGOs also view current media coverage as irresponsible, politically driven and sensationalist, thereby depriving the public of a well-informed, comprehensive and nuanced understanding of child rights.

Based on focus group discussions and interviews with child rights experts, advocates' key expectations from the media are increased coverage of success stories, responsible child-rights reporting, engagement of journalists in more in-depth investigative reporting (including follow-up and discursive pieces), and improved background knowledge of journalists on child rights issues. CSOs suggest that they could assist in the sensitisation of the media via workshops, organising field visits for journalists, and providing access to children during child-media interfaces, etc.

CIVIL SOCIETY ORGANISATIONS AND TRADITIONAL MEDIA: OFTEN AT ODDS

There are significant state-to-state differences in the quality of CSO-media relations, and in the underlying reasons for why CSOs seek media coverage for child-related issues. However, the form of interaction between traditional media and CSOs is almost always two-way, with each approaching the other, yet with each party intending to achieve vastly different types of media coverage. Media generally contact CSOs to obtain information/sources as a backdrop for sensational coverage on incident-based stories, mainly to increase audience. CSOs contact media for coverage of their work, primarily motivated by the need to ensure publicity and branding, with increasing child rights awareness often being a secondary goal. Many mid-to-large sized CSOs ensure that media professionals follow their organisation's child protection policies and cooperate with the signing of consent forms and formal parent/ guardian permissions before permitting interaction with children associated with their organisation.

Small, community-level CSOs, however, do not tend to have such systems in place.

Child rights advocates further shared that media professionals often have unreasonable expectations of CSOs. There have been incidents where the media has blatantly flouted child coverage laws and engaged in unethical practices, including in some parts of the country – demands from journalists that CSOs pay a certain sum for favourable reporting.[79]

"Journalists have forgotten what investigative journalism is. They expect us to give them their stories and detailed information – only then will they carry it. Journalists call us often… usually to give them access to a child, to facilitate entry into a juvenile institution etc, and sometimes they even request that we find out some information for them. They want us to do the work and provide them with a ready-made story. As a child rights activist, providing a ready-made, media-packaged story is not what I should be doing. Moreover, I do not like the idea of providing journalists access to a traumatised child/family just so they can cover a sensationalised story."

DIRECTOR OF A NATIONAL, NON-GOVERNMENTAL CHILD PROTECTION ORGANISATION

Large, national CSOs often have a separate media advocacy and communications department and some of these also hire PR agencies to enhance media coverage. The hired PR agencies usually track media coverage on child rights, keep a record of the articles that the organisation has been mentioned in and regularly brief the organisation on which issues or media houses quotes can be prepared for – most formal CSO-media house partnerships are primarily project/campaign based. Nevertheless, some large CSOs (including international organisations) admitted that despite the existence of media communication departments within their organisations, no clear media strategy is etched out and interaction is largely reactive, driven by current events, or is brand-orientated.

Partnerships with film or sports celebrities are a common strategy used by both small and large

A boy plays with his grandfather's mobile phone, India.
© GAWRAV SINHA / ISTOCK

CSOs in India for ensuring media coverage. All large organisations have officially partnered with celebrities to promote issue-based causes, while small CSOs usually engage in only event-based partnerships with celebrities. Child rights advocates are unsure of how effective celebrity involvement has been in genuinely highlighting child rights issues. However, it is generally accepted that well-known celebrities guarantee the presence of the media and they help provide the initial push and the momentary edge to campaigns. Engaging celebrities is cited as an expensive affair even though most celebrities agree on a pro-bono basis, as event production costs increase and the high-end needs of the celebrities are expected to be taken care of by the host organisation. Advocates feel that the biggest challenge when engaging celebrities, however, is that the media focuses far more on the celebrity than the child rights issue. Rather than the expert's opinions on an issue or concrete data, the less-informed celebrity opinions are quoted by the media.

CSOs of all sizes have been reasonably successful in

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79 Focus group discussion 3, Kolkata, 3 October, 2013.

Pritam Sarkar (15) takes photographs of houses in a suburb of Kolkata as part of a UNICEF advocacy programme that trains volunteers to map their community and give advice to families about polio immunisation, and to young girls about the dangers of child marriage. Conducted with NGO partner Prayasam, the programme encourages participation from socially excluded children as well as children from mainstream schools. © GRAHAM CROUCH / UNICEF

engaging with the media through formal or informal 'tie-ups', with some CSOs engaging in specific strategies to ensure wider coverage. However, the quality and effectiveness of such engagements in genuinely enhancing child rights awareness and policy impact is questionable. CSOs typically measure success within traditional media in terms of number of news reports that mention the organisation's name and/or project activities.

A few large state- and national-level organisations also look at proactive engagement and involvement with the media – this includes activities such as holding press conferences, media sensitisation workshops, providing issue-based information kits to journalists, arranging field visits for journalists, organising media-children interfaces, developing child rights media fellowship programmes, partnering with journalism schools and mass communication university departments to develop curricula on child rights coverage, etc. Organisations such as Plan India and UNICEF lead in this area, followed more recently by Save the Children and Children's

Rights and You (CRY). Many organisations also put down clear rules for their staff or partners regarding data sharing with the media. A large number of Indian CSOs have projects that focus on media skills training for children. Several small CSOs bring out periodical newsletters, news bulletins, magazines, etc. created by and for children that are distributed within local communities. There are also a few CSOs who have as their sole focus the creation of rights-based or development-oriented media material for dissemination through local or mainstream media.

Several organisations have attempted to engage with community radio and private FM channels, but these efforts have had limited success and reach. Further, because of the high costs of buying airtime on private radio stations or producing radio shows, such initiatives have been difficult to sustain once funding for a given project ceases. Traditional media forms such as theatre, dance, music, art, visual messages/billboards are also frequently used by hundreds of CSOs as part of their programme activities or for developing awareness/publicity.

Certain kinds of CSOs prefer minimal interaction with the media. Since media often tends to focus on government service delivery failures, several small and large government-funded CSOs or those that work closely with the Indian government, or in government premises, consciously avoid the media to avoid antagonising the government. Further, several small CSOs that focus primarily on implementation or service-delivery activities rather than advocacy or awareness-building choose not to actively engage with the media. Moreover, CSOs engaged in corrupt use of funds, or unethical provision of services strategically avoid the media to prevent scrutiny and consequent bad publicity, legal action or shut down.

Overall, CSOs have found local district-level media easier to engage with and far more interested in covering child issues than mainstream state- or national-level media. CSOs find print easier to engage with compared to television. The experience of child rights experts and media spokespeople regarding the level of respect during media interactions differed according to advocate, media outlet and state. A patronising attitude by the media towards CSO advocates was common, while statements by child rights advocates were occasionally twisted and misinterpreted by the media to sensationalise content for readers and viewers. Advocates further noted that media often call the same urban-based experts for a whole range of child rights issues. According to them, media professionals are unable to grasp the vastness of the child rights sector and the nuances involved, and to understand that opinion needs to be gathered from those expert on specific issues such as child labour, child trafficking and child protection etc. As a result, the range of child rights advocate voices is restricted and excludes grassroots opinions, creating the need for a CSO-media network to develop a list of credible, issue-wise experts.

As reported across interviews and focus group discussions, the current media-CSO interaction in India, particularly at the grassroots level, is weak or informal at best, with no clear long-term strategy in place. Many small and mid-sized CSOs are unable to set aside resources (time or staff) for media advocacy, and often do not know how to effectively engage with media within their limited resources. Further, many grassroots CSOs are themselves unaware of laws surrounding ethical media coverage of children. Therefore, advocates felt CSOs too need to undergo awareness training on child media coverage guidelines, so they can ensure journalists who are permitted to interact with their organisation's children abide by them.

CSOs also felt children should be given more opportunities to participate in the media. For instance, through an increase in media-children interfaces; training CSO-associated children to scan the media and give them access to media professionals with whom they can share their observations on the quality of child rights coverage and their opinions on key child rights issues; creation of a national-level children's newswire etc.

REPORTING CHILD RIGHTS: BALANCING MEDIA AND CSO NEEDS

Media in West Bengal blatantly flout basic child coverage laws. Indrani Sinha, Executive Director, Sanlaap, described her interactions with a local television news channel as an extremely frustrating experience, as the TV reporters refused to take her quotes when reporting on the conditions of the shelter home for trafficked girls run by her organisation. Moreover, in one instance, the channel took video shots of girls in the institution taken from the top of the media-van and across the iron railings of the main gate, without requesting permission and in spite of this being against the law. CSOs in West Bengal further reported that the media often refuses to carry stories of successful rescues if not permitted to take photographs of the rescued – i.e. trafficked – children. There have been many instances where media have published such photographs or revealed names, despite it being against the law.[80]

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80   Focus group discussion 3, Kolkata, October 3, 2013.

Ipshita Baidya (left) and Rajatava Halder (both aged 13) learn to produce radio programmes at Jadavpur University, Kolkata.
© GRAHAM CROUCH / UNICEF

CSOS AND NEW MEDIA: A RELATIONSHIP WITH HUGE, UNTAPPED POTENTIAL

CSOs typically see social media as a means of reaching their stakeholders – funders, policy-makers and potential volunteers. A majority of CSOs in India have websites, Facebook pages and, in some cases, Twitter accounts. However, only large organisations that have dedicated staff to work on their web presence have regularly updated social media sites. These sites are often used to circulate important information among child rights advocates, such as upcoming rescue raids or programme events.

The most impactful and widespread use of social media, however, takes place during active phases of child rights campaigns when this platform is used to create awareness and garner public support for policy changes. Running prolonged child rights campaigns, such as the Right to Education, Campaign against Child Labour etc. through social media is viewed as extremely useful as it can incrementally bring people on board. It is also seen as the only medium that supports live feedback and suggestions from the public, thereby providing the option of evolving and fine-tuning campaign messages based on public sentiment to make it more impactful. CSOs measure social media success in terms of number of likes, shares or signature registrations on online petitions.

Some CSOs have also begun to harness the popularity and efficacy of new media in reaching urban as well as rural youth. With the Internet penetrating villages and remote corners of the country through mobile phones, even small village and district-level organisations are beginning to notice its efficacy in not only gaining visibility, but also in engaging in activities with children and youth.

Several mobile technology-based social development service activities have been successfully initiated in India for various purposes such as monitoring programmes, creating awareness through information dissemination and training frontline workers. However, the majority of local CSOs in India

rarely use these as a medium to engage in child rights programme activities or to disseminate information. Child rights advocates agree there are many potential opportunities to be harnessed through mobile technology, but grassroots CSOs are largely unaware of how to do it.

Considering its power and potential for innovative use, there is consensus among advocates that new media remain severely underused by CSOs because of the lack of adequate expertise among civil society workers. Further, despite the increasing number of children online, few CSOs and advocates use the medium to actively engage with them. Currently, children largely use social media to interact with friends, rather than to discuss social issues. New media opens up tremendous possibilities for engaging teenagers in awareness and promotion of social causes – an area currently ignored by CSOs. Child rights advocacy groups have expressed far more interest in receiving training on new media tools such as Facebook, Twitter and YouTube than in receiving training on engaging with traditional media.

CIVIL SOCIETY AND MEDIA NETWORKS: A STREAMLINED APPROACH NEEDED

There are hundreds of district, state and national child rights networks in India; yet there is no dedicated network that focuses specifically on connecting child rights advocates to the media. National-level child rights networks are usually theme-based and comprise numerous independently functioning district and state-level networks, with leadership structures varying across networks. Many networks in India have informal partnerships with media professionals/media houses and sometimes also include individual journalists as members. A select few also engage in formal partnerships with the media. However, all the conveners/heads of prominent national networks interviewed stated that there was tremendous scope to enhance the quality of their media engagement in order to support high-quality, accurate and responsible reporting, greater child rights awareness and positive policy changes through media advocacy.

Prabir Basu, national convener of the Campaign against Child Labour (CACL) network, states that

one of the core areas where strong media tie-ups has come in handy is in the legislative space when filing Public Interest Litigations (PILs). Giving one example he says, "CACL compiled all child labour-related media stories into a book and presented it to the Supreme Court as evidence. This was a huge success and a key factor in bringing about the amendment in banning child labour within the domestic and hotel sector." Existing networks clearly stated that media advocacy was an area they struggled with, and any guidance/resources regarding media engagement would be well appreciated and would go a long way in promoting India's child rights. In addition to this, nearly all child rights networks and CSOs saw merit in establishing a joint CSO-media monitoring board for implementation of child rights reporting guidelines.

Focus group discussions and interviews further revealed that each advocacy-oriented CSO (local or international) attempts to create and head their own networks; each CSO is often a member of several different child rights networks. With several hundred in existence, advocates claim that there are far too many of these alliances and that it is difficult to keep track of all. Sanjay Gupta, Director, CSO Chetna, says, "There are so many network groups that active organisations like ours regularly receive about 12 to 13 Google group updates. Organisations often have to unlink themselves from network online updates due to excessive mails."

GENERATING CHILD RIGHTS COVERAGE: CIVIL SOCIETY KEY MOMENTS

CSOs organise several small and large child rights-oriented programmes throughout the year, often with some level of media engagement. The most long-standing child-focused festival in India is the International Children's Film Festival India (ICFFI) organised by Children's Film Society India (CFSI). However, there are no national-level events or festivals focused on child rights that bring together the various CSOs and other child rights stakeholders. Child rights advocates mentioned several specific days and events which could be leveraged to heighten media coverage on child rights issues. For instance, the release of large-scale data sets or flagship research reports by the government or CSOs, announcements of new child-related legislative acts or proposed

Nabanita Das (13) interviews a bus driver at a depot near the local school to raise the issue of traffic dangers for young students – part of her training as a young journalist at Jadavpur University, Kolkata. © GRAHAM CROUCH / UNICEF

amendments to existing acts; several national or international child-focus days, including: Children's Day (14 November), National Girl Child Day (24 January), World Day against Child Labour (12 June), Nutrition Week, Breastfeeding Week etc. During such days/weeks, both the CSOs and the media often set aside time and resources for child-related coverage.

CHALLENGES AND OPPORTUNITIES: CSOS AND MEDIA ACTIVITIES

There are a few potential challenges likely to be faced when engaging child rights CSOs/advocates in media-related activities. Those include engaging CSOs on a consistent basis, ensuring that CSOs do not feel over-burdened by the additional media networking activities, ensuring active CSO and child participation in politically sensitive geographical areas or on sensitive child rights issues etc. The high value attached by CSOs to organisational publicity and branding in news reports could also create a

barrier in CSO participation if this is not incorporated into the programme design.

A few additional points on opportunities and recommendations include the ample scope to improve quality and dissemination of child-produced content into mainstream media, opportunity to work closely with a large number of advocacy-oriented CSOs/ networks through strategy and capacity-building training, and opportunity for developing a well-publicised and moderated online portal for child-rights-related content upload by CSOs/advocates.

GETTING IT RIGHT: CSO INITIATIVES IN THE SPOTLIGHT

A major component of Plan India's four-year Amazing Kids project implemented during 2005-2009 was to mainstream child-produced content and child voices into the media by providing children with skills training on radio, digital media (photography, film-making), print and comics. As explained by K. Kannan – who headed the media advocacy division of Plan India during this project and who conceptualised this programme – media uptake of child-produced content through Plan's print-based Children's feature service (which included a periodic children's bulletin), and syndicated comic strip service was a moderate success, with more items being picked up by digital media and only a few by local newspapers. However, neither of these services survived after funding was withdrawn.[81]

Temporary increased coverage of child-produced content has been noted during largescale, theme-based child rights campaigns run by CSOs (e.g. on corporal punishment, Right to Education Act) when child-produced content in the form of personal print-based narratives were made readily available to the media by the CSOs.[82]

UNICEF's 'Child reporters reporting on children's issues' project implemented in Orissa since 2005 is claimed by the organisation as a huge success. As of 2009, the programme included more than 1,800 children aged 10-14, from over 150 schools. Children contribute to a polished, full-colour, bi-monthly broadsheet supplement of leading local daily *Anupam Bharat*, with a circulation of over 140,000 copies in the state. Here, children report on topics that affect them such as the lack of safe water, child marriages, challenges in attending school, food insecurity etc.[83]

Traditional media forms such as theatre, dance, music, art and visual messages/billboards are used by CSOs within programme activities or for developing awareness/publicity. For instance, in CSO Bachpan Bachao Andolan's Mukti Caravan, a group of ex-child labourers, travels around villages in India performing street theatre on child rights issues.[84] On similar lines, the CSO Breakthrough has a video van that uses street theatre, music, games etc. to develop awareness on issues such as child marriage, domestic violence etc. in Bihar and Jharkhand.[85] Banglanatak dot com is a social enterprise organisation that engages in theatre-based awareness campaigns on several development issues. CSO Sanlaap ran an effective anti-trafficking campaign by placing messages on local buses.[86]

An ongoing campaign that began about a decade ago and has received recent widespread coverage is the Nine is Mine campaign with the slogan 'Children's voices against poverty'. This is a children's advocacy initiative of the children, for the children and by the children, led by the Wada Na Thodo Abhiyan.[87] This campaign seeks to ensure that the Indian government keeps its promise of dedicating 6% to education and 3% to health. Under this campaign, children's press conferences have been held and the extensive media advocacy which has included print, television and social media has resulted in strong support for this campaign.

Sharad Sharma, Founder, World Comics, highlighted a successful case of media uptake in which a graphic story booklet about the rape and murder of women by the armed forces in a north-east state was sold at low cost to media houses. One newspaper then dedicated an entire page to these graphic stories. This helped bring the issue to the fore in a non-threatening way. The stories were then converted into strip format and appeared in over 100 newspapers.

Since 2006, a small district-level CSO called SMOKUS, with funding support from ActionAid, conducts an annual media advocacy programme on women and child rights issues. SMOKUS connects children affected by issues such as child labour, unsafe migration, cross border trafficking, child marriage, etc. directly with the media, to provide testimonies. The organisation has noted that over the years, this advocacy programme has encouraged the local media to communicate better with children, and to report issues from a child's perspective.

81 Krishnaswamy Kannan, ex-Plan India Media Communications Head. Personal interview (30 August, 2013).

82 Arun Anand, Freelance Senior Journalist and CSO Consultant. Personal interview (12 August, 2013).

83 http://www.unicef.org/infobycountry/india_50846.html (accessed 13 December, 2013).

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85 Sohini Bhattacharya, Director – Resource Mobilization, Breakthrough. Phone Interview, Delhi, 19 July, 2013.

86 Indrani Sinha, Executive Director, Sanlaap. Focus group discussion 3, Kolkata, 3 October, 2013.

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3 KENYA:
AMPLIFYING THE VOICES OF CHILDREN AND YOUTH

Raising awareness about the protection of children and the promotion of children's rights remains a challenge to the media in Kenya. Stereotyping, portrayal of children as helpless victims, lack of children's voice and stories, and complete omission of child and youth-generated content in programming are common problems when it comes to media coverage.

Paradoxically, our research revealed the enormous potential of a vibrant media industry to make a difference in children's lives, as well as the strong will of all stakeholders, including media houses and institutions, CSOs, NGOs, and government institutions, to be fairer, more accurate and more responsible in their portrayal of children in the media. A fairer depiction would help safeguard child rights and dignity, raise awareness of those rights, expand the public and the policy debate, and keep authorities alert to the protection needs of children.

GOVERNMENT CHILD RIGHTS POLICY AND PRACTICE

There are various policies and laws regulating the protection of child rights in Kenya. At the same time, there are bills being debated in Parliament, while others are under review to bring them in line with the Kenya Constitution 2010. One of these is the Basic Education Act 2013 which is currently being reviewed in response to the constitutional requirements that now guarantee free and compulsory basic education for all children.

The Borstal Institutions Act, which regulates child incarceration/detention in remand homes, has been in place since 1963, but it is not properly enforced, leading to wide gaps in the child justice system. The Children Act regulating the practice of child rights

came into force in December 2001 after concerted efforts and protracted advocacy by civil society following ratification of the 1989 Geneva Convention on the Rights of the Child. The National Child Participation Act, which regulates involvement of children in various activities in the country, was also drafted by the National Child Participation Steering Committee.

The Child Justice Bill is being debated in Parliament and is formulated to fill the gaps in child prosecution. For example, the Kenyan law prosecutes adults for engaging in sexual activity with a minor but is silent on teenage sex. The Child Justice Bill is being discussed alongside the Sexual Offences Act.

The Kenya Constitution Articles 53 (1) and (2) address the socio-economic rights of the child – key among the rights stipulated in Article 53 is the right to free, compulsory, basic education.

A young Rwandan boy listens to the radio. © INTERNEWS EUROPE / NANCY FARESE

While these elaborate legal frameworks exist and policy debates are ongoing, the current challenge lies in weak implementation and enforcement, and the inability to hold government accountable for improving implementation and ensuring enforcement. This situation was summed up by a CSO representative: "lack of a duty bearer (government) accountability and corruption" are major impediments.

The existence of elaborate policies and laws in Kenya notwithstanding, implementation and enforcement are still wanting. Laws on child labour, corporal punishment and child incarceration, access to education, child protection, exploitation and abuse are not effectively enforced because of many factors. First, the general public in Kenya appears disinterested or indifferent to policy issues

on child rights. Second, it is only the media and CSO voices that strive to hold government accountable for effective implementation and enforcement. The media's current capacity to hold the government accountable is low because most journalists are not conversant with policies and laws around child rights – this needs improvement.

Third, some aspects of child rights are in gross conflict with Kenyan customs and traditions relating to rites of passage to adulthood, and communities are often resistant to the eradication of harmful cultural practices like female genital mutilation, early marriage and child betrothal. Moreover, where children are concerned, most rural communities in Kenya prefer out-of-court settlements and the use of cultural or traditional structures to resolve disputes, or silence the problems to avoid community shame.

I. THE KENYAN MEDIA LANDSCAPE

Radio is the most popular, influential and trustworthy source of information for all Kenyans. All studies point to the popularity of radio for disseminating information countrywide.[88] TV and newspapers rank second and third in popular use, respectively, whereas new media platforms come fourth. In Kenya, each type of media provides access to a specific target population (see Table 1).

Table 1: Kenyan media and access to consumers

Media	Access
Radio	Rural populations including children/youth and parents
Television	Urban youth, children and parents
Newspapers	Policy/decision-makers
New/social media	Policy/decision-makers, urban working adults and middle-class youth

Most of Kenya's children and youth listen to radio entertainment, especially music and sports shows. In rural areas they access information through the few national radio stations broadcasting in English and Swahili, and myriad radio stations broadcasting in other African languages. Parents and guardians in rural areas rely largely on radio for information: they listen to news and radio call-ins which discuss issues including politics and religion. Recently there has been a shift in the style of radio entertainment and sports programming towards audience participation through call-ins, which allow them to be heard live on the radio. Studies show a quarter of radio listeners access radio through mobile phones, and the majority of these listeners are the rural youth.

In parts of northern Kenya affected by hardship and crisis, public broadcaster Kenya Broadcasting Corporation is the only source of information for children and youth, parents and CSOs, and policy- and decision-makers, because of its medium wave radio frequency. The region also experiences weak mobile phone signals, making information sharing difficult.

For children and youth in urban areas, TV is the most popular medium. Young people watching TV enjoy music, drama, soaps and sports, which are broadcast in the evenings between 5-10pm. Children's programmes are broadcast on Saturdays. Radio remains popular – especially the 'urban' stations that have developed specific content and programming for this audience. They play trendy, urban-local and international music.

Access to new media is generally limited to urban youth who have Internet-enabled mobile phones – almost all of whom are Facebook subscribers. They follow both traditional and new media with an online presence on Facebook. This has been made possible by falling prices of Internet-enabled phones, and the move by all media houses to have Facebook pages.

Among Kenya's youth, text messaging is used for inter-personal communication. This means of communication is well used by the myriad civil society organisations working on child rights, health, democracy and governance issues.

Policy- and decision-makers access information through daily newspapers, magazines, advocacy briefs, the Internet and the *Kenya Gazette*, which reports on all policies and bills that have been passed into law. Due to their high cost and reduced accessibility, newspapers are the medium of the socio-economic and political elite. Children's pages exist in the main daily newspapers, such as The *Daily Nation* and the *Standard,* and there are magazines targeting parents.

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88   Read, for instance, the Ipsos-Synovate KARF quarterly audience research reports on Kenyan media.

KEY FINDINGS BY INTERNEWS EUROPE'S STUDY[89] ANALYSING CHILD RIGHTS CONTENT ACROSS PRINT, TELEVISION, RADIO AND SOCIAL MEDIA

Children don't tell their stories in the Kenyan media – a patronising attitude towards children leads to an almost total exclusion of children's voices. Firstly, children are rarely quoted by journalists writing stories about them – the majority of quotes in news items or programmes were attributed to policy-makers and child advocates. Secondly, there is "an astounding, complete omission of child/youth-generated content"[90] in the Kenyan media. Our survey hoped to include video segments produced by children, or by child/youth-led organisations; editorials placed by children or teens; and articles written by (identified) child/youth journalists. While there were mentions by journalists of youth-led or created events, programmes and initiatives, the monitoring sample failed to turn up any news items produced by children or youth and circulated on traditional media.

- 10 print and six TV outlets were searched for news items relating to child rights. Following an extensive search using one media database and online news websites, the media research team found a total of 188 print (132) and TV (56) news items from which a random sample of 100 was drawn. In this sample, news items which appeared in print publications represented 70% of the sample, while TV news items represented 30%.

- News coverage accounted for 82% of the sample, with extremely low levels of opinion news items – only six editorials were present in the entire sample, representing a lower-than-expected level of feature coverage. Without these types of stories there is a lack of in-depth, thoughtful, well-discussed reporting. Instead, the media landscape is a series of one-off news items, more likely to focus on single incidents or violations without context and depth of discussion.

Moreover, without editorial and opinion news items, there is a void of credible voices and authority figures on the issue of child rights.

- Five radio programmes were listened to every weekday when live streaming was available to the research team. This produced a total volume of 87 radio programmes listened to – of these, 45 radio segments contained child rights content, meaning Kenya has substantial radio coverage addressing child rights issues – quite promising as radio is a top medium for Kenyans.

- The quality of child rights media content in Kenya is very low. Kenya had the lowest score on the nine-point quality indicator system out of the countries looked at – with an average score of 2.7 out of 9.[91] More concerning, 52% of stories scored had a 1 or 2 rating.

- Two factors measured by the nine-point rating system were the level of sensationalism of media coverage (as identified by headlines, content and images), and the characterisation of children as hopeless, helpless victims. The Kenyan media performed badly in these two indicators: out of the total sample, 79% of stories contained a stereotype of children as hopeless, helpless victims, while 37% of the sample was sensationalised (see box for example). These were the highest numbers seen across all three countries in the study. In comparison, only 14% of the stories in India were sensationalised and 15% in Brazil.

- Kenya had far more negative coverage than India or Brazil: 11% of the monitored stories about child rights were assessed as 'negative/anti-child'. While 11% may look relatively low, it is, in fact, nearly four times higher than India, with 3%. This can partly be attributed to the number of child or youth crime stories that are covered, which typically blame the child for the crime committed.

89 Detailed data and analysis can be found in *Missed Opportunities: How Media in India, Kenya and Brazil Present Child Rights*, Douglas Gould and Company (DG&Co.), 2013.

90 *Missed opportunities: How Media in India, Kenya and Brazil Present Child Rights*, Douglas Gould and Company, (DG&CO.), 2013.

91 During the scoring of each news item, researchers assessed the quality linked to each individual element. For each element that was in line with the quality factor, the piece of content received one point. The highest score a single news item could receive was 9, meaning it adhered to all quality guidelines and factors, and had the highest quality. At the other end of the quality scale, content that met none of the quality guidelines received 0. None of the three study countries scored well (all were below the median of 4.5). The average score for a Brazilian news item was 3.9 on the 9-point scale, followed by India at 3.5.

Children from Mji Wa Neema race to get in line for the Sunday morning church service. They will sing and dance down the main aisle of the church, an integral part of their community. © KAREN ANDE

- The social media landscape in Kenya is more encouraging. A number of Kenya's leading media outlets are active in social media and communicate about child rights issues. Similarly, CSOs and prominent personalities are voices of authority on Twitter – 93% of the social media conversation being on Twitter – and the key influencers on social media. They proactively comment on child rights and can launch social media campaigns to sensitise the public on thematic issues or specific incidents.

- While other countries featured stories focusing on just a few key topics, Kenya covered a wider variety of topics containing child-rights content. The greatest percentages of stories were about child education (18%), physical or sexual abuse of children (12%), and child health/nutrition (10%).

ENDING THE PORTRAYAL OF CHILDREN AS HOPELESS VICTIMS

A news item from *The Star* newspaper talks about street children as voiceless nuisances:

The District Public Health office has expressed concern over the increased number of street children. Ezekiel Bowen, a health officer, says the growing number of street children in Naivasha town has become a challenge to the department as far as health issues are concerned.

Speaking to residents during the World Environmental Day on Wednesday, Bowen said the children have contagious diseases. "Last year we treated one street boy who was suffering from measles in the town and we were concerned he will spread to others," he said.

Bowen said the spread of contagious diseases may be high with the street children moving from one corner of the town to the other. "We have also treated several others suffering from different contagious diseases and it is tricky because we have been confining them at the prison for medical observation until they recuperate," he said.

(Murage, 2013)

A satellite dish in Kakuma refugee camp, Kenya. © IAN MACLELLAN

II. THE MEDIA PERSPECTIVE

Internews Europe conducted focus group discussions with media professionals in Nairobi and in Eldoret to directly engage editors and journalists in conversation on the potential of child rights media activities, and to discuss the current media landscape in relation to child rights.

All journalists and editors interviewed across Kenya's traditional media outlets confirmed the challenges of reporting children's stories. These include interviewing children, identifying victims of child neglect/abuse, broadening the current, narrow focus of coverage on specific incidents of abuse, and avoiding stereotypes. All journalists and editors welcomed the idea of starting a 'child rights media training project', as this would give them necessary knowledge and tools to guide appropriate child rights reporting and safeguard the rights and dignity of children.

Such a training project could take advantage of current changes in the media landscape in Kenya:

social media occupies a growing space while a new, devolved mode of government enshrined in the Kenya Constitution 2010 is creating a media shift towards more local networks. The training project could respond to the need for training on child rights reporting for current journalists, and a new crop of journalists shifting out to the grassroots level.

Kenyan media professionals also observed that while the Media Council of Kenya (MCK) is a regulatory and training body, a separate organisation could be useful for coordinating child rights training and reporting, as this is a specialist area. They stressed that the overall success of a child rights media projects lies in supporting positive collaboration and constructive working relationship among media organisations, state actors and others.

Focus group participants noted the lack of agreed guidelines for reporting on child rights, which undermines the quality of their reporting. They said one organisation needed to be identified to spearhead the process of developing and adopting

Peer educators in the offices of *Straight Talk*, a newspaper
covering issues around sex, HIV and AIDS.
© GIACOMO PIROZZI / PANOS

acceptable guidelines, and suggested the involvement of academics from journalism training institutions to do this.

Editors observed that media awards for excellence in covering child rights had not been given the priority they deserved, and suggested mainstreaming them with other awards. Also, awards for reporting in local languages are needed to encourage journalists from vernacular stations reporting on child rights, as they are the ones reaching out to rural populations in Kenya.

Finally, participants noted the importance of broad efforts to increase child rights awareness. They suggested that media and CSOs should be engaged/ supported to work together to raise awareness and create the momentum needed to spark a public policy debate on child rights.

OPPORTUNITIES AND STRATEGIES TO BOOST MEDIA COVERAGE OF CHILD RIGHTS*

- Kenya recorded a high percentage (52% of the radio sample) of radio stories containing child rights content. Coverage of this type of content in this medium should be encouraged, as should the participation of advocates in radio call-ins that are discussing these issues.

- Work to forge partnerships with outlets across all mediums, to reduce the percentage of negatively slanted articles, as Kenya has the lowest score of all three countries in our survey. There is significant room for improvement of this coverage which can be achieved by educating media on IFJ standards.

- Encourage more youth-developed content. Showing children's work and encouraging them to share their ideas and hopes will help to stem the tide of stereotypes of children seen as hopeless, helpless victims.

- The importance of working with media to curb sensationalism in Kenya cannot be overstated. Journalists across all media types need to be educated on crafting an accurate story without sensational elements or word choices.

- Because the Kenyan media includes child rights content in all kinds of news items across all story topics, there is a great opportunity to present the media with story topics that capitalise on a current event they're likely to cover, including a child rights and/or public policy angle. Since our analysis shows that the media will write about these topics, injecting the frame of child rights issues is a good recommendation.

- The sample contained a few monthly publications – feature stories should be encouraged in these outlets. These types of publications tend to feature longer, more in-depth pieces.

- Kenya had a broader list of social media influencers than the other countries studied; this list should be cultivated and grown to ensure they keep commenting on these issues.

*SOURCE: *MISSED OPPORTUNITIES: HOW MEDIA IN INDIA, KENYA AND BRAZIL PRESENT CHILD RIGHTS,* DOUGLAS GOULD AND COMPANY (DG&CO.), 2013.

CHILD RELATED NEWS AND CONTENT: LIMITED AND LACKING DEPTH

As described above, traditional and new media present information on child rights in the form of news. However, the news is generally presented without emphasis on rights. Radio carries more stories of child rights violations than any other platform. Each vernacular station has at least one story of rights violation daily, according to editors and journalists. The *Sunday Nation's 'Young Nation'* supplement, featuring its 'Children and Law' column is the only identified child rights-focused newspaper content for a child audience. Generally, social media contains archived stories originally presented by primary media, meaning news in primary media is well reflected in policy debate on social media.

Overall, journalists and editors agree that information given to the general public is limited, and features one-off coverage of incidents without sustained follow-up. Most of them are not aware of the International Federation of Journalists (IFJ) guidelines for media coverage of child rights, nor the Children's Act 2001 or the Convention on Rights of the Child. But they were aware of some of the reporting pitfalls, for instance:

- whereas the media protects the identity of the child whose rights have been violated, the identity of the parents, the school and neighbourhood of the victim are often revealed;

- while the voices of victims are included, alleged perpetrators are not given the opportunity to comment in the media;

- where 'mob justice' is televised, and the alleged perpetrator is presumed guilty (with his/her face publicly shown), the right to a fair trial may be contravened.

> *"We don't have very good relations with the media. It is on a 'need' basis and there is a disconnect for sure. The way children's matters are reported is quite outrageous. No journalist is specialised in child rights reporting. Most media houses focus on politics and see children as entertainment. They lack sensitivity."*
>
> CSO, NAIROBI.

The poor quality of coverage is attributed to little or no training for journalists in quality coverage of child rights. The media law and ethics segment of standard journalism education does not include a strand on child rights. Additionally, journalists are uninformed about policy development, the status of implementation, and enforcement gaps – a situation which is worsened by a media-CSO disconnect. Overall, there is a lack of individual initiative from reporters and editors to improve child rights reportage.

CHILD-LED CONTENT – ESPECIALLY ON CHILD RIGHTS – IS ABSENT FROM MEDIA

There are no children's programmes presenting information on child rights on either radio or TV. Child programming focuses on talent search formats, entertainment and school education curricula, as opposed to information on child rights. Journalists and editors explained that most children's programming that comes from 'the West' is disconnected from the socio-economic reality of children in Kenya, and makes little sense to children in a rural African setting.

Child programming does not provide a quality platform for education or sharing of information on child rights or related issues. Commercial interests influence managerial and editorial decisions on children's programming, encouraging a drift towards entertainment – the focus is on increasing audience and, thereby, revenue. Programming decisions are not made to meet the needs of the child audience. For example, some children's programmes are broadcast very early on weekends when children are asleep and cannot watch or listen.

The most prominent child/youth voices in media are found in entertainment: music, drama, and school curriculum-based entertainment. These are music audio and/or visual content performed by children and youth, but produced by adults. The participatory approach used by call-in TV and radio music shows enable child/youth voices to be heard only when they make song requests via text code or call-ins. Youth voices in social media are reactions to news and unfolding events in the public domain.
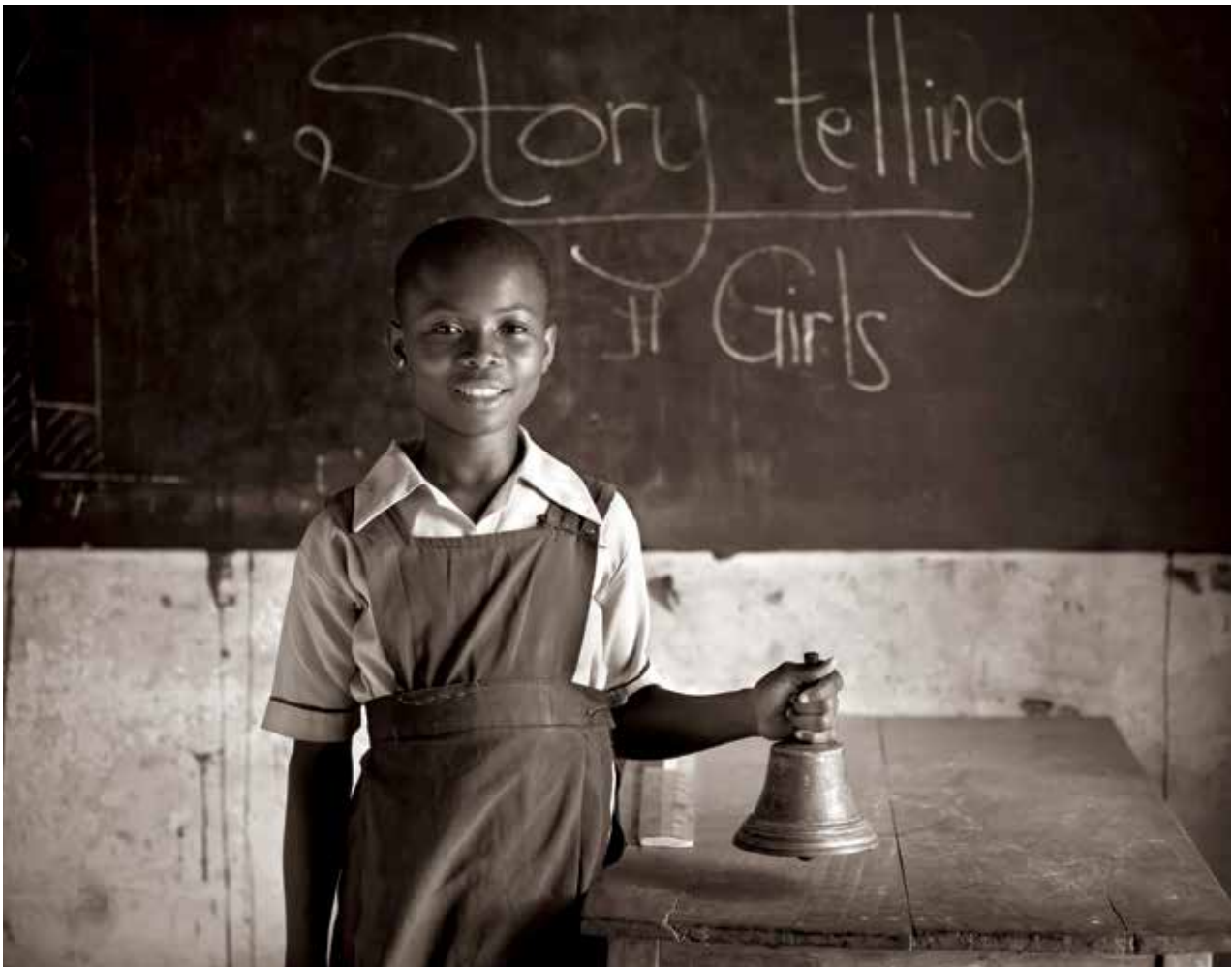
A schoolgirl attends a storytelling session at school. © MARK TUSCHMAN

There is hardly any child produced media content in Kenya, and there is a negligible amount of urban-youth produced music content for TV and radio entertainment. Journalists emphasised the need for quality child-produced media content which may be broadcast on radio, TV and across social media platforms. The absence of child-produced media content is attributed to the low level of child media-literacy and exposure of children/youth to mass media, limited access to media practitioners, little or no access to production equipment and lack of training on child media content production.

On another note, in traditional Kenyan culture children have no say in family and public matters, which adds to the reasons why their voices are absent in the media. Media professionals observed that some parents and teachers think that talking about children's rights is tantamount to "spoiling the child" since "they shouldn't know much" lest they become unruly. The need to encourage and respect children's opinion in matters that affect them was expressed.

MEDIA ACTIVITY AROUND CHILD RIGHTS IS SCARCE

Despite the fact that Kenyan media is considered to be the most developed in east and central Africa, there are few media activities linked to child rights.

As mentioned above, there are no specific media guidelines for child rights reporting in Kenya. However, three articles of the Code of Conduct for

Photo taken during an Internews screening in Rwanda. © INTERNEWS EUROPE

the practice of journalism developed by the Media Council of Kenya give journalists some guidance on producing responsible coverage of child abuses. These are Articles 17 (Editors' Discretion), 18 (Protection of Children), and 19 (Victims of Sexual Offences). In 2008, the Association of Media Women in Kenya (AMWIK) developed and published the Media Code of Conduct on Reporting Child Sexual Abuse and Exploitation. The Association also formulated a training manual for District Labour Officers and child rights CSOs to support better engagement with media. These guidelines represent a good attempt but need to be reviewed in response to new trends (especially in social media).

There are seven public universities and over 10 private colleges offering journalism as a course – the University of Nairobi's School of Journalism is one of the leading institutions in terms of facilities and human resources. However, there is no child rights-specific training module in the journalism curriculum. The general Media Law and Ethics

courses taught in journalism schools do not contain a segment on child rights reporting or coverage.

A number of civil society organisations based in Kenya however have been training practicing journalists on child rights reporting. AMWIK, African Women and Child Feature Service (AWCFS) and Plan International Kenya lead this effort. They also carry out activities to network media and child rights CSOs. Plan International Kenya has initiated the Journalists for Child Rights Network which specialises in child rights reporting. Plan International Kenya continually trains CSOs on media engagement and awareness on varied social issues, including child rights. Due to budget constraints, these organisations have slowed down their media activities for the past two years – reducing their impact on the ground.

Media literacy activities in Kenya are very limited and, according to research, include the following:

• Lola Kenya Screen organises children's film

festivals across the country.[92]

- The Kenya Alliance for the Advancement of Child Rights (KAARC) has established Child Rights Clubs in 80 schools in Kenya and some of these clubs include media literacy activities.[93]

- Media Council of Kenya (MCK) media literacy training to the general public on how media works[94] – not specific to children.

Media awards acknowledging child rights reporting are currently as follows:

- Children's Right Media Awards, organised by Bubble Nest International.

- Annual Journalism Excellence Awards (AJEA), organised by Media Council of Kenya, introduced a Children and Youth Media category in May 2013.

MEDIA RELATIONS WITH CSOS AND GOVERNMENT

According to Kenyan media professionals, the media-CSO relationship is characterised by mistrust and misunderstanding. These groups have not developed professional, mutually supportive relationships. The only time child rights CSOs engage with media is when informing them to cover incidents of child rights violations or official functions. Media professionals particularly complain about CSOs' lack of understanding of journalism and weak communication skills. They requested Internews Europe to train CSOs on media relations, especially on organising media events. Reporters in Nairobi admitted not knowing which specific CSOs deal with child rights: this contributes to the low level of child rights coverage in mainstream media. But reporters working at the grassroots level – for instance in Eldoret and Mombasa – have established substantial working relationships with child rights CSOs.

OPPORTUNITIES TO CLOSE THE CSO-MEDIA GAP

Editors and reporters suggested the following strategies for bringing CSOs and media closer in pursuit of children's rights:

- Media and child rights stakeholders must work together to develop and implement widely accepted guidelines for reporting on child rights, and to establish enforcement mechanisms.

- The lack of specialisation in child rights reporting could be addressed by media training and working with editors to assign particular reporters to child rights stories. Reporters and editors are willing to undergo training, mentorship and capacity building on reporting on child rights and child programming. This would increase the quantity and quality of child rights news stories.

- Child rights media projects could reduce the CSO-media gap by strengthening professional networking through trust-building workshops, forums and other forms of professional exchange, including circulating a CSO calendar of activities.

- Child-produced media content could be increased by training children to produce such content, increasing their access to production equipment and organising sustained child-media interaction through child-journalist sessions.

- Partnerships between the media and decision/policy-makers could be enhanced by increased professional networking, policy briefs and roundtable events.

- The absence of awards for child rights coverage for vernacular outlets was mentioned. To address this gap, local awards organisers could be encouraged to introduce vernacular categories or support reporters to translate their coverage.

92 http://www.lolakenyascreen.org/tag/media-literacy/
(accessed 13 December, 2013).

93 http://kaacr.com/ (accessed 13 December, 2013).

94 http://www.mediacouncil.or.ke/index.php?option=com_
content&view=article&id=21&Itemid=119 (accessed 13 December, 2013).

A family in Kakuma refugee camp watches television. © IAN MACLELLAN

The media in Kenya has a mixed relationship with the government. In some instances there is cooperation while, at other times, suspicion dominates media-government interactions. Where child rights are concerned, media and government have had little or no interaction in terms of policy debate, lobbying or implementation. This gap contributes to the inability of media to hold the government to account, leading focus group participants to express the need for strengthening media-government networking for the benefit of child rights. Child rights media projects could engage the government through the competent Cabinet Secretaries, the Children Department, as well as various Education Offices at provincial, county and district levels. Indeed, as Kenya moves to a more devolved structure of government, such a project could target county assembly committees for training on media engagement, and coordinate county assembly media cooperation on child right issues.

III. THE CIVIL SOCIETY PERSPECTIVE

CSOS' PREFERENCE FOR TRADITIONAL MEDIA

Community radio is the medium of choice for most child rights CSOs in Kenya. The community radio outlets are plentiful, readily available, unique to particular communities, and use local African languages. Local radio outlets attract local listenership by covering the issues that affect them. Thus, these local radio stations present a popular and appropriate outlet for CSO advocacy messages.

Specific radio stations are always available when contacted by phone and collaborate with CSOs through offering subsidised advertising rates, and hosting advocates on morning breakfast shows and evening call-in programmes. They sometimes offer roadshow caravan services at no cost, as these activities build station popularity. For instance,

Teenage girls read *Style & Substance,* a magazine for young Kenyan women. © SVEN TORFINN / PANOS

in Eldoret, Rural Women Peace Link, Family Health Option Kenya Youth Centers, and Eldoret County Children Department run child-focussed programmes on various radio stations (BHB, Sayare Radio and Chamgei FM) where they share child rights information. During these programmes, CSOs educate communities on the dangers of female genital mutilation, early marriage, child neglect, and denying children education. Listeners also call in live to share their views. The main challenge, according to CSOs in Eldoret, is that the time is limited due to restricted sponsorship of these commercial children's programmes.

For CSOs operating in major cities, all traditional platforms are available for use. Whereas radio covers day-to-day issues around child rights, TV mostly covers only the worst cases of child rights violations, often based on information provided by CSOs. Print and TV reporters also run features on child rights issues. However, according to CSOs

interviewed, there is very limited follow-up by media or continued coverage, which calls for improvement. Both TV and radio reporters seek the opinion of CSO representatives as authorities on child rights, and some key representatives of child rights in Kenya are often invited by the media to provide expert opinion on topical issues.

Magazines and journals are mostly used by child rights CSOs to publish advocacy briefs, policy analysis and law reviews. Some CSOs, including AMWIK and the Cradle, publish monthly, quarterly and annual magazines, and newsletters and journals posted on their websites and circulated among stakeholders. While larger CSOs have the capacity to communicate effectively with the media – with some larger organisations having professional communications staff – smaller CSOs consistently report that they are ill equipped to write press releases or op-eds, or organise press conferences.

CIVIL SOCIETY ORGANISATIONS: STARTING TO MAKE THE MOST OF NEW MEDIA

The use of new media by civil society advocates in Kenya is varied. With the increasing subscription to Facebook and Twitter fan pages of CSOs, they are able to share information instantly with a variety of groups. The ability of subscribers to comment on Facebook, re-tweet or reply to a tweet has enabled CSOs to get information on child rights violations, and feedback on activities carried out and on policy debates.

Social media has also made it easier for CSOs/advocates to network and share information with both media houses and reporters on child rights issues. Child rights debates on TV get real-time participants to give their views via the station's Facebook page or Twitter. Mobile phones are useful for viewers to comment via an SMS code managed by the media house. The other advantage is that even when the debate has ended on TV it continues on social media, with bloggers sharing TV footage for continued analysis and debate.

High-profile journalists and other media personalities in Kenya have vibrant online social media presence through which they share varied information. For this reason, CSOs follow them on both Twitter and Facebook, and share links with reporters on Twitter, resulting in child rights information being shared to a wider audience. On Twitter, well-known child rights activists also share information on child rights – Twitter is the platform of choice for CSOs and individual activists.

CSOs admit it is not feasible to reach children though Internet and social media because they don't have mobile phones and email accounts. They target them through older siblings, older relatives and parents who subscribe to social media networks. These target groups share relevant information with children in their care.

Despite the value of social media, CSOs say more attractive and interactive social media pages, blogs and websites are needed to better engage participation by the general public. Whenever there is a public policy debate on child rights, CSOs could work with influential Twitter bloggers to create a hashtag for

Child in Seneto Cultural Boma, Kenya. © SHUTTERSTOCK / PAPA BRAVO

the debate for crowd-sourcing and get relevant voices to comment. Focus group participants suggested that CSOs with a good track record in social media could share best practices with counterparts through exchange workshops and seminars, during which influential bloggers, media personalities with a large social media following could interact with advocates.

International child rights organisations working in Kenya have vibrant online presences, posting case study reports, quarterly reports and policy achievements on their websites. Their social media pages are rich with information about international activities, achievements, policy discussions and government partnership initiatives. The use of websites among Kenyan CSOs is equally robust. They share various publications and studies including e-newsletters, policy and advocacy briefs, periodic reports and journals with other CSOs, international CSOs and relevant government departments. When more attention and action on certain issues is needed, CSOs use a closed email list for invites before follow-up by phone. While the government still relies on

A young brother and sister watch television at home in Kenya. © PEETER VIISIMAA / ISTOCK

hard-copy letters for formal communications, they share publications on policy, case studies and reports on ministry websites.

On another note, the use of mobile phones and SMS has been successful in reporting cases of child rights violations through the child helpline 116, managed by Childline Kenya. The other uses of SMS by CSOs are more internal to the CSO community and are primarily limited to setting up impromptu meetings, following-up on government appointments, and in cases where something requires immediate feedback.

GENERATING CHILD RIGHTS COVERAGE: CIVIL SOCIETY MOMENTS

Child rights CSOs in Kenya organise and celebrate the events below, in addition to international calendar days:

- The Day of the African Child.

- Pwani Children Voice Conference is a three-day event in Mombasa County, held in the second week of August.

- Annual Children's Conference was last held in 2010 in Nakuru. This could be revived with consultation with former organisers.

- County Children Assemblies are organised by the county Children's Department during April, August and December holidays.

- Annual Primary and Secondary Schools National Music and Drama Festivals are organised by the Ministry of Education in April.

- Children's Right Media Awards is organised by Bubble Nest International.

- Annual Journalism Excellence Awards (AJEA) is organised by Media Council of Kenya. A 'Children and Youth Media' category was introduced in May 2013.

Lutheran World Federation information officer Mohamed Sheikh Ibrahim tells new arrivals in Hagadera refugee camp, Dadaab, Kenya, that they will soon be relocated to another camp. Internews found that 60 percent of new arrivals need more information about shelter. © INTERNEWS / MERIDITH KOHUT

THE REALITY OF COMMUNICATING CHILD RIGHTS: THE CASE OF DADAAB, KENYA

The Dadaab refugee complex in north-eastern Kenya is the largest refugee camp in the world. The five camps which make up Dadaab comprise the third largest population centre in Kenya, and are home to more than 400,000 refugees, of which 241,158 are children.*

These children are among the most vulnerable in the country. As Muthoni Hari of Terre des Hommes stated during a research interview in October 2013, "Children in Dadaab face all of the same child rights issues as other vulnerable children in the region, on top of all of those rights issues associated with being a refugee." Around 5% of children in Dadaab are assessed to be unaccompanied or single child-headed households, and this group are particularly at risk.

In addition to the stresses of poverty, child labour and frequent malnutrition, children in Dadaab face the unique challenges presented by their refugee status – a complex legal identity, limited access to education and services, and an uncertain future. Girl children from the Somali community also go

through female genital mutilation and early marriage.

The pressure placed on refugees and child rights in Dadaab has been increasing in recent years, as anti-refugee rhetoric is raised in the Kenyan media and by prominent public officials. A tripartite agreement signed between the governments of Kenya and Somalia and the UNHCR in November 2013 lays out the framework for the returns and repatriation process, and as this becomes a reality, the rights of children will become even more critical.

There are more than 30 humanitarian agencies currently active in Dadaab. Many of these work with children, or play a significant role directly or indirectly in child rights and protection, including the UNHCR, UNICEF, Save the Children, Terre des Hommes and the legal aid NGO Refugee Consortium of Kenya. The Government of Kenya's District Child Officer also actively works on behalf of children in the camps. While the humanitarian presence in Dadaab is strong, the unique circumstances and

A family in the 'overflow' area for new arrivals at Dadaab refugee camp, Kenya, where information is vital but scarce."This is not life. No homes. No water. No toilet... nothing. Only a wristband... and that is not a life,"says Abdi Hassan Isaack, a Muslim religious leader organising aid distribution for refugees. © INTERNEWS / MERIDITH KOHUT

An Internews team of locally trained enumerators conducted over 500 surveys in the three refugee camps in Dadaab. Survey results show significant information gaps between the humanitarian sector and aid recipients — 70 percent of new arrivals said they need more information about how to register for aid. © INTERNEWS / MERIDITH KOHUT

security environment in Dadaab make outreach and communication with children enormously challenging. Each of the agencies working with children interviewed by Internews Europe identified local media as a key potential outreach tool which is currently underused by the humanitarian community. Notably, Save the Children ran a successful, short, child-led radio pilot programme in 2013 and has expressed interest in working with Internews Europe to continue this media work in Dadaab through their Child Education and Welfare Centres.

The range of media accessible to refugees in Dadaab is, however, extremely limited, with only two widely available Somali language radio stations. Somalis make up 97% of the camp's residents and other languages, including Kiswahili and English, are spoken by only a fraction of the population. It is not surprising then that 74.2% of the camp population list radio as their most trusted source of information, whilst only 5.4% report having access to television, and only 7.4% read any kind of print media.**

Local media and journalists have received no specialist child rights training, and their understanding of the issues is limited. Indeed many Somali radio journalists have no specialist journalism training at all. Journalists and management from the two Somali stations, as well as freelance journalists interviewed for the research, identified child rights reporting as a key area in which capacity building was needed.

Social media is used by those with access to Internet-enabled phones, including Facebook and the chat application Nimbuzz, but for children, usage is extremely limited and is usually restricted to sharing with older family members to communicate with relatives abroad. More commonly phone handsets are of the basic kind, although many include an FM radio and this is a common media access point for children in Dadaab .

*SOURCE: UNHCR POPULATION STATISTICS, 2013, HTTP://DATA UNHCR.ORG/HORN-OF-AFRICA/COUNTRY.PHP?ID=110).

**SOURCE: INTERNEWS EUROPE HUMANITARIAN INFORMATION NEEDS ASSESSMENT, FEBRUARY 2013.
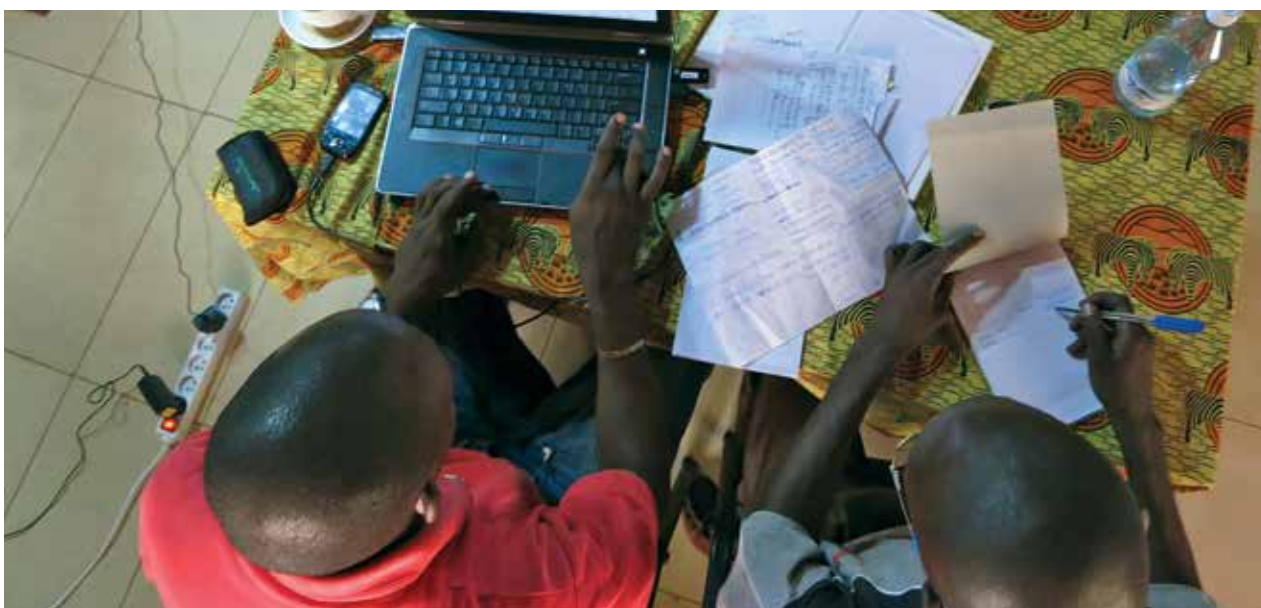
An Internews project in Bangui, Central African Republic, works to create networks between journalists and aid agencies.
© INTERNEWS

BRIDGING THE GAPS: SUPPORTING CSOS TO UTILISE THE MEDIA

At the moment the major challenge facing CSOs in effectively using the media to advocate for child rights is the CSO-media gap at the national level, because collaborative networks have not penetrated all parts of the country. There is, therefore, an opportunity to expand the existing Journalists for Child Rights Network to fill these gaps.

The CSOs represented in focus group discussions observed that there are many players in the child rights sector, but they lack proper coordination. This challenge provides an opportunity for a neutral body to facilitate the establishment of a representative coordinating body. Some CSO representatives observed that there are several 'briefcase' CSOs in the country that are only looking for funding and are non-compliant with existing regulations. In this regard, it is imperative to perform a background check on CSOs before involving them in any media programme.

RAISING THE VOICE OF CHILDREN

From CSOs' point of view, increasing their own media literacy levels and those of children/youth could amplify the voices of children in the media. It would increase their understanding of how media works, and enhance their use of platforms for advocacy and empowerment. Local CSOs running child programmes on community radio would particularly benefit from such training. It could improve their capacity on child media content production and child programming, thereby increasing the number and quality of programmes featuring child voices.

Journalism and child rights clubs in schools could be trained to produce media content such as newspaper articles, and audio and visual content for radio and TV. KAARC and the Cradle run child rights clubs in schools, while Plan Kenya also works with school children and teachers to raise children's voices on issues affecting them through 'speak out boxes'. CSOs and media professionals agreed that children need to be trained to produce quality child media content that can be broadcast on various media platforms. CSOs also recommended the use of numerous Kenyan youth theatre groups to focus plays on child rights, and have the plays filmed/recorded and produced for radio, TV, and online platforms.

On another note, CSOs observed that bridging the child-media gap through a series of child-journalist/reporter sessions across the country could help children network with journalists who may, in return, mentor them to tell their own stories.

THE WAY FORWARD:
RECOMMENDATIONS

A young girl at the microphone in a recording studio. © ISTOCK / ABALCAZAR

Based on the research findings summarised in this report (see page 8), Internews Europe has identified a bundle of strategies to address the problems and prepare the ground for media and communications to really make a difference for securing child rights. They can be summarised in four main categories:

1. More youth journalists:

The best way to empower children to put forward their perspective in the media is to help more of them become journalists themselves. This can be done, for example, in radio programmes (or even a whole radio station) that are run by youth, or by creating youth media bureaus/centres in various locations. Internews Europe's research has identified a couple of excellent opportunities in the three countries studied.

Kavita, a journalist for Khabar Lahariya newspaper, interviews children at a primary school in the Chitrakoot district of Uttar Pradesh. Written in the local dialect and produced by a group of seven low caste women, the newspaper currently has a print run of 1,500 and is sold in approximately 200 villages in the district. © AMI VITALE / PANOS

Ideally, these youth journalists should be affiliated with mainstream media. In the countries covered by this study, many youth journalists have already been trained, but their reports do not get distributed beyond niche print and online platforms (such as CSO publications, newspapers' own child supplements, small websites or YouTube channels). A similar challenge can be observed in the many existing projects that teach children to tell their stories in non-journalistic formats. They are unlikely to reach much of an audience beyond those who are already very aware of and interested in child rights. It is therefore crucial to broaden the outreach of youth-generated content to new audiences in order to strengthen its wider impact on the public debate. In Kenya, radio would seem the best medium for such projects because of its dominant role. In India, on the other hand, Hindi and regional language newspapers would make better partners.

2. Establish incentives for journalists to specialise in child rights:

Several approaches, or combinations of approach, will be useful to encourage journalists who are motivated to become child rights specialists (and their editors). These include:

- child rights reporting modules at journalism schools

- online (or classroom) professional training courses

- fellowships for reporters who wish to investigate child rights violations and find it difficult to get funded for this by their own media outlets

- yearly awards for the best reporting on child rights issues.All of these measures would help the arena of child rights to be taken as seriously as it demands, as well as create a cohort of child rights journalists that would likely continue to encourage and motivate each other to improve coverage.

Some common deficits highlighted in this report should be kept in mind when teaching, selecting and awarding journalists for these projects, such as neglect of children's voices, stereotyping children as victims, sensationalism and non-political treatment of child rights violations.

3. CSO-media networking:

Clearly, there is a need to improve the working relationship between media and child rights groups. The gaps identified in this report are not unusual in other contexts, and Internews Europe has worked elsewhere with considerable success to bridge them. Elements of a successful intervention in this area are most likely to include:

- communication training for CSOs, involving journalists

- workshops and field visits for journalists, involving CSOs

- regular dialogue meetings between both groups from a local to national level, to improve personal interaction, but also to draw up and implement concrete action plans that address jointly identified issues

- the creation of institutional networks with concrete benefits to all members.

4. Establish and monitor guidelines:

An area where improved relations between CSOs and media would be particularly useful is the joint establishment and monitoring of ethical guidelines for reporting on child rights. Agreeing on guidelines themselves would probably be less controversial, as many versions already exist. The real challenge would lie in making sure that they are implemented. It is suggested that here again, joint mechanisms would have to be agreed between media and child rights advocates, including regular

Media communications can make a difference to child rights if training, networks and monitoring are prioritised, and if children's voices in the media are amplified. © MABLACHE / ISTOCK

monitoring and reporting. Purely external monitoring (and possibly condemnation) of media by civil society or even government bodies would risk generating an adverse response from journalists.

Besides these four main areas, support for improving the use of digital/new media platforms for communicating child rights issues would be another useful intervention. In India particularly, this booming space seems clearly underused. Both CSOs and media outlets have expressed their interest in this kind of capacity building, which is likely to go a long way to promote constructive public debate on child rights violations and necessary remedial action.

Lastly, the field of media literacy education for children and youth has attracted quite a bit of attention recently.[95] The new risks (and opportunities) associated with the Internet and social media have strengthened the case for more action in this regard, both in the traditional school system and beyond. Internews Europe, too, has done pioneering work in introducing media literacy education in several countries, and is looking to strengthen this area of engagement. It offers particular opportunities when it comes to reinforcing media's role in promoting child rights, as children and youth can not only learn to understand and use both traditional and digital media better; they will also be in a position to make more informed and powerful demands for media to change its coverage of child rights issues. The combination of media literacy training and feedback from youth audiences to journalists has a lot of potential for innovation.

Keeping in mind the challenges and opportunities that this report has identified, Internews Europe strongly believes that the intersection of media and child rights deserves substantially more donor attention, and more engagement from both the media development and the child rights sector.

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95   See for example John Burgess, Media Literacy 2.0: A Sampling of Programs Around the World. An Update for the Center for International Media Assistance, November 2013. http://cima.ned.org/sites/default/files/CIMA-Media%20Literacy%202_0-%2011-21-2013.pdf

A group of children working at a brick kiln, in Lahore, Pakistan, August 2012.
© SHUTTERSTOCK / GARY YIM

"EVERYONE HAS THE RIGHT TO FREEDOM OF OPINION AND EXPRESSION; THIS RIGHT INCLUDES FREEDOM TO HOLD OPINIONS WITHOUT INTERFERENCE AND TO SEEK, RECEIVE AND IMPART INFORMATION AND IDEAS THROUGH ANY MEDIA AND REGARDLESS OF FRONTIERS."

Article 19, The Universal Declaration of Human Rights.

Internews Europe is an international development organisation that specialises in supporting independent media and free information flows in fragile states, emerging democracies and some of the world's poorest countries.

The need to protect the principles first enshrined in the Universal Declaration of Human Rights more than 60 years ago remains as urgent as ever. The media plays a key role in upholding the declaration's principles, but often countries with poor human rights records are those with limited media freedom.

Internews Europe trains both professional and citizen journalists to analyse and report on human rights issues more effectively. We support independent media to preserve access to information and promote the monitoring of human rights violations.

We support freedom of expression by helping to keep information flows open and connecting civil society organisations with their local media.

Through free access to information and the ability to express opinions, individual citizens can better understand their rights and contribute to meaningful public debate about related issues in their societies. In turn, they can hold those in positions of power and authority to account, and increase the chances for positive social change. Liberalised, plural and professional media, in all forms, can educate citizens about their rights and amplify the discourse around the human rights agenda.

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