



Gender in the media

Sarajevo, May 6-13 2013

Guidelines for young journalists
reporting on gender-sensitive issues



Contents

Introduction	3
The guidelines	5
- <i>The article</i>	6
- <i>The topic</i>	8
- <i>The journalist</i>	10
- <i>Voices from the training</i>	14
Good practice articles	15
- <i>What do Bosnians think about the issue of gender equality?</i>	16
- <i>A victim's testimony: what is hate?</i>	18
- <i>Over 25.000 people were raped, yet only 4350 testified</i>	22
- <i>ZenaZrtva-Rata aids victims of abuse</i>	25
- <i>We are not afraid of anything. Our attackers, however, should be</i>	28
- <i>The position of women today is worse than under Tito</i>	32
- <i>What is the gender of age</i>	35
- <i>Nurturing feminism</i>	42
Organisers	44
Funders	46
List of contributors	47

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Introduction

Gender stereotyping in the media is one of the ways in which discrimination on the basis of sex continues to exist. By understanding and investigating gender prejudices in the media, however, journalism can identify and strengthen its role in combating discrimination.

The training course *Gender in the Media* gathered together 24 young media-makers from more than 15 EU and EU-neighbouring countries, with the objective of developing journalistic guidelines on how to avoid gender-based stereotypes in the media and in media content. The training course took place in Sarajevo, Bosnia and Herzegovina, from May 3 to 12, 2013. It was organised by the European Youth Press (EYP) and Youth Press Association of Bosnia and Herzegovina (ONAuBiH) and was funded by the European Youth Foundation (EYF) and the International Planned Parenthood Foundation (IPPF).

During this week-long training event, the participants analysed gender stereotypes and the inclusion of these in the media, and were trained to recognise their occurrence, enabling the journalists to produce their own, stereotype-free, media material. The training was intended to give them the opportunity to develop their journalistic competence and to understand the importance of their work, in building a more democratic society and in combating gender discrimination.

The participants developed the media products and guidelines that you find in this booklet during the training course.

The training included theoretical input sessions and presentations, simulation games, group work, study visits and plenary discussions. Bosnia and Herzegovina served as a case study, both in the theoretical sessions, such as a panel discussion focused on 'Women in Conflict Zones', and in the media production, through our study visit to the organisation 'Women Victims of War'. During their free time, participants also had the chance to experience Sarajevo and get to know its people and history.

the guidelines

Gender stereotyping in the media is one of the ways in which discrimination on the basis of sex continues to this day. By understanding and investigating gender prejudices in the media, journalists can discover and increase its role in combating discrimination.

The participants of the *Gender in the Media* training course developed a set of journalistic guidelines for recognition and avoidance of stereotypes in the media. These guidelines do not attempt to present a perfect toolkit for reporting on gender-sensitive issues, but rather to give a helping hand to journalists in their reporting.

The article

When choosing topic and angle
Tackle the issue of gender balance and positive discrimination in reporting on other areas (not only exclusively in “gender” stories).

If possible, give gender an angle.

Bring stories that go against “standard” gender roles.

Forget about any previous stereotypes.

Always be aware that you are a creator of public opinion.

Do not report about gender issues as if it’s only a female problem.

Do not patronise women because you try to be “sensitive”.

When preparing for the interview
Use expert databases, do not always use the same experts on the same topics and try to differentiate the gender of experts.

Analyse legal frameworks.

Research, consult and exchange opinions with other professionals.

Try to always represent genders equally in your articles (role, gender of interviewed people).

Check best and worst practices. Compare and try to understand what can be improved upon in your own material.


During the interview
Ask people how they want to be referred to.

Be aware that images also are subject to interpretation.

Do not restrain yourself from asking questions in general.

If you are not sure about appropriateness, communicate in a respectful manner and show good intention.

Do not ask questions about superficial things, related to hair style, clothing, etc.



Avoid clichés and assumptions. Ask about them but do not suggest them.

Ask the same questions to men and women, it is interesting to know how anyone – man or woman – manage for instance career and family.

When writing your article

Practise gender sensitive language and inform yourself about the terminology that appear to have a different public perception from what they actually mean (feminism, sex, gender, homophobia etc).

Avoid using phrases such as: “as a woman it is very hard to”.

Give minorities / the underrepresented an active role, instead of victimising them.

The topic

How to cover LGBT-related stories
LGBT-rights should be promoted within the media.

Avoid sensationalism when writing about LGBT-people.

Inform yourself about the terminology used and the meaning of certain terms such as queer, transgender etc.

Do not be afraid to talk about taboos, feelings, personal experiences, prejudices and exclusion.

Do not always portray people as victims.

Treat them as human beings and not LGBT by default, do not put people into boxes.

Use normalisation-principle (ie.g avoid writing “Jenna is lesbian” but rather write about her life-style, her partner).

Write anonymous stories if needed.

How to cover stories on female (and male) leaders

Do not only connect attributes such as “strong” only to men, do not make men “manly”.

Think about the usage of terms like “strong” or “passionate” (when you stress that a particular woman is strong, what does that say about other women?).

Do not emphasize people’s gender, but rather their leadership qualities and achievements.

When writing about people in power, focus rather on their work than their life choices.

Female leaders are policy-makers, and how they look should not matter in your article.

How to deal with multiple taboos (gender, sexuality, handicap, age)
Be aware of phrasing and use a multi-angle approach.

Create opportunities for understanding through wider coverage

eg. tell different stories, give different angles of the same story.

Do not be afraid to ask straightforward questions: what do you think of this issue?

Let everyone speak for themselves, do not talk over people's heads.

Show people in other contexts (e.g. handicapped people talking about current affairs or politics rather than about being handicapped).

Avoid clichés and generalisation.

Emphasize how to overcome taboos and do not just make sensation out of it.

Do not be less critical of someone's situation because he / she is part of a minority.

Make sure you use definitions that do not contain emotional connotations (such as "immigrant").

Concentrate on the individual, not only his or her gender, disability, age, sexual preferences etc.

How to cover stories about victims of abuse
Start with general questions to ease into a testimony.

Let people speak as much as they want to and finish their story.

Once people have finished their testimony, you can go deeper.

Always respect if the person does not want to talk about something.

Do not take pictures if the person does not want you to.

Male rape is often a taboo, be sensitive.

Rape is a trauma in itself. When combined with other circumstances such as war it doubles the sensitivity of people.

The journalist

What journalist can do to improve gender representation in media

Reports about gender-related issues should not include physical appearance, it should be on all levels: sports, politics, education, economy, etc.

Show all people as human beings, not just as “women” or “LGTB”.

Do not simply focus on gender, investigate the deeper context which will lead to gender awareness and sensitivity.

Avoid generalising.

If you want to interview an expert, think about options and do not always go with the most obvious one.

Criticise advertisements that are discriminatory and do not support them in your media outlets if possible.

How journalists can become more gender sensitive

Dedicate time to go through resources about gender issues.

Attend gender-related seminars, inform yourself.

Reflect on your own experience.

Think about who is not present in this story, who is invisible?

Be / remain curious about issues that are not generally found in the media.

Remember: male discrimination also exist.

Being gender sensitive is important, but also to be aware of other interests as well. Do not exclude important information even if there is a risk of not being gender-sensitive.



Things you should keep in mind,
being a journalist

As a human you cannot be 100 percent objective, but as a journalist that is your duty to be as fair and balanced as possible.

Telling some stories, and excluding others can also create stereotypes.

You cannot include all sides of a story in your article, but you can make your story as objective as possible.

Nowadays anyone can produce media and information for the public. It is your job as a reporter to provide the critical layer.

How we see gender in public and private life depends on how the media reflects it.

I am not
ashamed to
dress like
a woman
because I
don't think
it's shame-
ful to be a
woman

- Iggy Pop



Voices from the training

- We are missing women in reporting*
- Journalism is not only my job, it is also my mission.*
- There are no statistics available for journalists when it comes to LGBT and the violation of their basic human rights. You can try, but you will always speculate.*
- Gender is not only a female issue.*
- Gender-sensitive language should be introduced in journalism.*
- Everybody should be on board when it comes to reporting about gender.*
- While there is still a long struggle ahead on the journey towards equal rights and respect for the LGBT community throughout the world, 2013 represents a watershed year as even more countries and cultures adopt laws and policies that formally recognise those rights.*
- One of the great successes of LGBT reporting in the media over the past few years has been the diffusion of personal stories that make the issue connect to most anyone who values the lives of their family or friends.*
- Remembering the dignity of the people you are interviewing is crucial.*

the articles

The following articles were written by the participants of the *Gender in the Media* training course and are to be seen as good practice examples in reporting on gender-sensitive issues.

What do Bosnians think about gender equality?

During the *Gender in the Media* training, a couple of our reporters took to the streets of Sarajevo to ask citizens what they thought about gender equality.



Vladovc has his own hair salon.

– Being a hairdresser is not a ‘female’ job here, there are only two old ladies working as a hairdresser in Sarajevo.

– A man will never sell flowers the way a woman does, because flowers are gentle and we all know that that is a female characteristic.



Nermina has been selling flowers for more than 20 years.

– Should I say what you want to hear or do you want my honest opinion on female taxi drivers? I do not want to take sides, but I have only seen a few women who could handle the chaotic traffic of Sarajevo. Most of the women get confused and distracted all the time. They try to do fifty things at once, like doing their hair and make-up while driving. There are some men talking on the phone or smoking as well, but everybody does that, that is not a gender thing at all.



Nerman has been working as a taxi driver for one and a half years.



Seilja interviews people in the streets.

– Everyone can do what they want, as long as they fight for their right to do it. ●

A victim's testimony: What is hate?

By Sanja Jankovic

Eighteen years after the war in Bosnia and Herzegovina, 40 year-old rape victim A.M. speaks about memories, trauma and the key to healing.

- I was 19 when the aggression started. My family and I went from Visegrad, where I come from, to Gorazde. After a week, we heard on the radio that we should go back and that people should return to work. My father, mother, sister and I got on the bus to Visegrad. During the trip, we had to get off the bus and open our bags three times because we supposedly had weapons with us. We arrived safely at our house near the Drina river, and everything seemed to be fine. Then, after three days, we had visitors. My family

After all, he used to go fishing with my father, he wore a uniform, and I was taught to respect that, since he was someone who worked to protect me

and I were in the living room; father approached the balcony and saw our neighbour, Veljko, a policeman whom I have known and respected since I was a little girl. I would always greet him on my way to school or the city centre. After all, he used to go fishing with my father; he wore a uniform, and I was taught to respect that, since he was someone who worked to protect me. He came to our house with two soldiers dressed in military uniforms with white belts. Their badges said 'Military Police'. Veljko came to the dining table, took off his rifle and put it in the kitchen. He lined us up on a small couch, which we could barely fit on. That is when the maltreatment

started, explains A.M. as she lights a cigarette and takes a deep drag of smoke.

– He shouted and asked who broke into his apartment, his hand hitting the table so hard that it cracked. He asked for money, gold, any valuables we had. At one point one of the soldiers went into another room. Mum followed him. We were told soldiers would throw several bullets into the house and then accuse families of owning weapons. There was some kind of souvenir on the television set that my sister had bought on a trip to Sarajevo, which said “For an independent and sovereign Bosnia and Herzegovina”. He did not like it. The other soldier did not speak, and had a white beard. Their beards must have been fake as the two of them looked exactly the same. I thought they were twins, A.M. says, looking distant.

After a while she continues:


– The first soldier told me to come into the other room and turn towards him. He was so tall I had to hold my head really high to see his eyes. They were red. He said “You will do everything I tell you, otherwise I will cut out your eyes and make you eat them, just like they did to my friend in Vukovar.” He took the rifle and kicked the walls as if he wanted to find hidden compartments in the wood, until he noticed the entrance to the attic in the ceiling and told me to fetch the ladder. When my mother saw me coming out she gave me a sign with her eyes, as if to say “run away, and do not come back”. In front of the house I ran into my sixteen year-old sister talking to another soldier. The military was all around the house and we were asked if we had a sniper rifle. I recognised one of them, my

school friend's cousin - I could tell he was surprised to see me there.

I went into the street. In the corner, my neighbour was being held against the wall as if crucified, his head turned towards the Drina river. Four soldiers in strange, navy-blue uniforms were beating him, while his mother was sat on the other side of the house, her head covered with white sheets. Then he was killed. I also saw Novo Rajak, who was already convicted and had spent eight years in prison in Zenica. I was about to go to my neighbour's house to get the ladder, but she gave me a sign from the window not to come, as she wanted to protect her three daughters, so I went back home. My mother was shocked to see me return. The soldier who told me to get the ladder pushed me into another room; he could not

open the doors fully since the couch was behind them. He made me open all the closets and he checked whether we had guns. After this, he threw me on the couch, and that is when he raped me, A.M. explains before making a short break and continues:

- His name was Dragan and he was from Arilje. He did not tell me this; I found that out later from other women he had raped. Apparently he had said it to one of the victims, although it may not have really been his name. The next thing I remember is my mother screaming, and something blunt hit me on the head. I remember being in the same room holding a towel on my head. I passed out. The hospital was close to our house, and I remember lying on a table. My mother recognised the doctor, as he used to treat my grandfather.



“The next thing I remember is my mother screaming and something blunt hit me on the head.

He asked me if my mother was a mental patient; I looked at her, and she was shaking on the bench. I said she was not. I received stitches for my wounds, and was told to come back in seven days to have them taken out. It was a Monday. I did not get any pills or shots. My mother took me to a woman’s house on the other side of the Drina. I had a temperature of over 40 degrees Celsius. I took the stitches out myself.

How has it been living with that for the past 18 years?

A.M. looks at me, smiles and says:

– Saying “hard” would not be enough. But I was lucky; my family was very supportive, and I at-

tended a lot of conferences and seminars, which helped me to heal. Maybe it was also because I addressed my trauma very quickly. Anyway, I would not want it to affect my family. I see a therapist from time to time. Still, that trauma is in me as well as in the women I work with. They tell me their stories and I tell my own. At least I do not go to bed with that man on my mind anymore.

Do you hate that man?

– No. Hate does not lead you anywhere. After all, what is hate? How can you hate someone you did not have a fight with? Why would you hate when it will not hurt that person, but only you? It is corrosive, and if you do not deal with it, it will eat you. ●

Over 25.000 people were raped, yet only 4350 testified

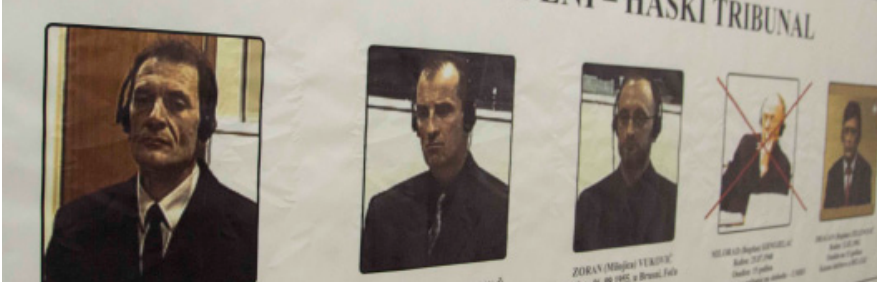
By Sanja Jankovic

According to the association 'Women Victims of the War', over 25,000 women and 1000 men were raped during the war in Bosnia and Herzegovina from 1992-1995.

The victims were Serbian, Croatian, Bosnian and Romani. In total, 90% of the rape and sexual harassment was committed against Bosnian women. In 2003, 'Women Victims of the War' was founded in order to provide these victims with a rallying point and, three years later, men were invited to join the initiative. The association offers support, both psychological and financial, to members, in terms of housing solutions, schooling for the children of victims and much more. Even though it has now been ten years, only 4350 people have testified; out of these, 200 obtained

an acknowledged status, meaning that they came to the association, testified and received a certificate and status as a 'Victim of War'. The association encourages men and women who have been sexually harassed or raped to testify and seek help. Meliha Merdjic, a representative of the organisation, explains the procedure:

– The victim calls the association, we schedule an appointment when we do not have meetings, so they know no-one else will see them. Sometimes it takes up to three hours for a testimony, espe-



cially if it is the first time the victim talks about it. The approach is important too; once our members come to terms with the fact that the workers in the organisation are victims themselves, they start to open up.

A very sensitive issue

Most of the testimonies are provided by women, and it would seem that many men who were victims of abuse are possibly even more reluctant to talk about their experience than some of their female counterparts. Even when they schedule an appointment, many repeatedly postpone it until they feel ready. Balkan Investigative Reporting Network (BIRN) journalist Denis Dzidic says that this may be because male victims feel particularly stigmatised:

– It is possible to get an interview from a male victim, but it is also very difficult to publish his name. If sexually harassed and raped women are a taboo in this society, imagine how it is with men. You can count the number of texts written on sexually harassed or raped men on the fingers of two hands. Another problem is our media mostly remembers these victims on anniversaries, often as a means for a politician to capitalise on the issue. On rare occasions you will read about what victims need, how to approach them and how their lives can be improved, explains Dzidic.

Psychotherapists identify rape as a trauma, and the vulnerability is doubled if a person has been raped in a time of war. Snezana Francuski explains that rape vic-

tims often have difficulty recovering since it is not just a physical trauma, but affects several aspects of a person:

– They feel ashamed, powerless, they lose confidence. In most cases, this leads to sexual impotence, since they have a different perception of themselves as sexual beings. Of course, people can heal; the time of healing depends on the individual, but with good psychological work and partner relationships full of love, commitment and understanding, one can fully recover, says Francuski.

No justice for all

Even if one manages to recover, they cannot rely on the government, as Bosnia and Herzegovina does not have a transitional justice strategy or a law concerning the victims of torture. This essentially means that there is no process through which victims can receive

justice, and no framework which can help them to return to their pre-war state of being. Until now, the Hague tribunal has accused 161 criminals; a number of these have been released, while others have died before sentencing, leaving a total of 90 successful prosecutions and, on a state level, the Court of Bosnia and Herzegovina has successfully convicted 100 of the accused. This aside, there are minor courts on a cantonal and district level dealing with this issue and, in total, they have managed to resolve a maximum of 100 reports. There are still, however, 1300 open investigations against known criminals, and the amount of time required to pursue all of them to completion could be upwards of 45 years. Further, if we take into account cases in which the perpetrator is unknown, the likelihood of most of these cases ever being solved is close to nil. ●

Zena Zrtva-Rata aids victims of abuse

By Eliana De Leo

She has knotty, hard-working hands with no time, and maybe no will, for things like nail polish or manicures. Nevertheless, A.M is anything but shabby.

She smokes a lot, and that is why I notice her hands. In a few hours I see her light and stub out countless cigarettes. Occasionally the hands shake. They betray her emotions, but also her determination. The room is not the most comfortable; many faces decorate the walls, as well as seemingly anonymous houses, newspaper articles. They make the air thick. Maybe it is me, for I am not at ease; she, however, is, or at least is more at ease than me.



The beginning is like all beginnings; formal. Since 2003, A.M has been hearing terrible stories of abuse and war crimes, many of which would never have reached a wider audience without the work of people who, like her, are committed to their goal.

Medical and financial support

To provide assistance to those who have suffered violence of any kind during a war is a long and complex process, particularly when there is a sexual aspect to this abuse. It is not confined to the accusation and social assistance, but also involves psychological and psychiatric support. A.M works with clinics, but these all too often have a limited

If you do not tell the story, it did not happen.



supply of such staples as sleeping pills, which are instrumental in easing the pain caused by the thoughts and reminiscences which can torment victims all day, every day.

Between 25,000 and 30,000 cases of sexual abuse occurred during the three years of war in Bosnia- Herzegovina. Of these, those of 4000 women, 225 men and 55 children have been gathered by the 'Zena Zrtva-Rata' ('Women Victims of War') association. Without this group, victims would receive little or no financial support; war victims

are supposed to receive a contribution of about 280 Marks per month from the government, but it is not easy in practice to actually obtain this. Further, those who no longer live in Bosnia, often due to a self-imposed marginalisation, as a result of a sense of shame or even because their attacker is still living in their old neighbourhood, have no access to these funds. 'Zena Zrtva-Rata' is able to provide these people with basic accommodation, as a start, and assists with the costs associated with schooling children.

A long work process

All of this is the result of relentless work. A.M looks toward the

future with new eyes and new hands, which are wide open to new people and to all the good things life has provided her with since the war. Before we leave she says:

– If you do not tell the story, it did not happen, and at this a smile appears on her face. The media attention on this issue is almost non-existent, barring the occasional arrest of a known war criminal, and even in these instances it is the victims who are forgotten, while the focus is squarely on the criminal. To be aware, to understand and to inform, is a long process that should be developed every day. Good luck 'Zena Zrtva-Rata'. ●

“We are not afraid of anything. Our attackers, however, should be.”

By Katerina Kuznetskova

Bosnia's 1992-1995 war was one of the most appalling in the series of armed conflicts which broke out when the Yugoslav federation fell apart.

The most terrifying moments of the Bosnian war, for most women, began in the summer when the Serbian forces started arresting young men. At the same time, the ‘weekend warriors’, as they called themselves, came to Bosnia to ‘play war’, which they said was one of their hobbies.

The total number of rapes which occurred during this period has been estimated at between 20,000 and 50,000, and one of the victims of these crimes believes that it is still important to report about it today. She (and this will be her

name throughout this article) shakes her shoulders fearlessly and says she can and will talk about it, because she wants the world to know and, moreover, because she wants the world to care.

During the war, rape became a common occurrence in Bosnia, a terrifying thought when discussing this issue. Bosnian women felt so helpless and unprotected that, afterwards, the decision to help those who suffered came on its own, and so ‘Women Victims of the War’ was established in Sarajevo in 2003.

– We are not afraid to come forward as an organisation, She says, and continues:


– We need the attention. Sometimes we have to go to press conferences and ask journalists to listen to us. They must recognise that we need to be heard, even eighteen years after the tragedies took place.

Scared to report

The assaults still remain unspoken of by many men and women who became victims. A lot of them are scared to reveal what happened, even today.

– It is not a topic you discuss over a cup of coffee. Especially not in this country, She points out.

Many of the victims tend to keep quiet because their rapists live nearby, and as soon as the police report on a criminal being arrested, a lot of victims come forward to confirm the identity of the rapist and testify, as it is then relatively safe to do so. But how is it possible to take criminals to court if nobody reports them? She is not scared to come forward; she talks about the man who sexually harassed her during the Bosnian War. Now, he lives in another country and has



It is not a topic you discuss over a cup of coffee. Especially not in this country.

a family, but could he come back to Bosnia or ever feel free? Most likely not. She, however, can, and this notion, as well as the desire to bring her attacker to justice, have helped her to move on

Only 17 convictions to date

– It is hard to deal with when you know that the person who did this to you is alive and lives down the street, She says. Some of those thousands of victims gave up on their hopes of justice and moved to another country. The law in Bosnia states that those who have been out of the country for more than three months cannot report on the crime afterwards.

She tells the stories of the pain which is not being reported on, of the perpetrators who are not being punished. Nearly 25,000

rapes happened during the war. From these, approximately 4000 cases were reported, and of these only 2000 were legally submitted but are not yet approved. According to BIRN-reporter Denis Dzidic, the number of convicted criminals is 17. The pain and agony of 25,000 people who want justice for themselves and punishment for their rapists, then, is still present. Is there a cure?

Regulating the legal status of the victims is the biggest problem. Everything happens on a state level and reporting the crime is a road to nowhere, as the desirable outcome for the victim might never be reached. For men, it is even worse; the amount of those who share their story is unbelievably small, with only 225 cases having been reported.

Facing the past

– Everything can bring back horrible memories. Sometimes it can be a door bell or trivial things that remind you of what happened. Her talk is fast and emotional, but her face tells the real story. It is hard to understand the language, but this is one of those moments when facial expressions cross the language barrier, bringing the focus onto the person and the pain hidden inside, She says.

Does media portrayal have an expiry date? Why is a problem which is still present not being tackled, but instead being placed in a distant drawer? Why do we, as journalists, not discuss something which is worth repeating, even if it happened many years ago? ●

The position of women today is worse than it was under Tito

By Jonas Tylewski

When visiting an organisation for victims of sexual harassment, A.M spoke of the changes she has seen in the country throughout her life. While there, I was surprised to learn that the picture that I had of Bosnia and Herzegovina was completely false.

- Bosnia and Herzegovina, she said and interrupted herself. Some moments of silence. She did not say anything more than her country's name. Simultaneously, I started thinking about the country and its prejudices; Bosnia and Herzegovina is not a member of the European Union. The economic situation must be worse than it is in Greece, Spain and Italy combined. What about the human rights situation? That might be a reason for not being a member state. She interrupted my ongoing thoughts by

repeating the country's name and staring at me. I knew what she was thinking: "Whatever you thought in these last few seconds, you are wrong!"


She is A.M, a Bosnian woman who witnessed many cases of sexual harassment during the war. Now, she leads an association known as 'Women Victims of the War', and in that capacity she has spent the majority of her time fighting for women's rights. Her biggest success; the official recognition of sexual violence

committed during the conflict as a war crime.

Being unaware of the women's rights situation in Bosnia, I wanted to know how the war had changed the picture for them. For me, it was clear; it must have been worse, in the past.

I did not expect the human rights situation to have been good under Tito, who has often been considered to be a dictator. Therefore, I had a bad picture of former Yugoslavia as, to me, high crime levels and daily human rights violations came to mind. I was, however, more than a little surprised about





Women were in a certain way equal to men. Without any doubt; the situation before the Balkan War was fairly advanced, for that time.

what I heard in the following minutes, and it did not take long for me to realise that I was entirely wrong in my assumptions.

As A.M told me, Yugoslavia was a safe country:

– You would not have locked your door and you could have left the key in your car. Nobody would have broken in or stolen the car, she explained. No crimes, no danger. Women were in a certain way equal to men. Without any doubt; the situation before the Balkan War was fairly advanced, for that time.

The war changed a lot; thousands of women were raped by soldiers

and, afterwards, they had to fight to be recognised as victims of the war. Women's rights all but disappeared. War has its own set of rules - rights are not the same as during peacetime. Even now, however, the general situation is still worse than it was in former times, and the state of safety and security in Bosnia and Herzegovina is not remotely comparable to the circumstances under Tito.

However, the outlook of affairs for women is improving. A.M is proud of all the successes her organisation has had in its short life so far. Many young feminists are, however, not satisfied, and want more than just equality. As far as A.M, is concerned though, she wants only to see rapists be punished properly and considered as war criminals. This, then, remains her aim in life. ●

What is the gender of age?

By Olimpia Parje

The issue of gender equality is currently one of the most conspicuous topics on the European public agenda; consider the recently-passed law which legalised gay marriage in France, or the most recent proposal for a European Directive to introduce a quota for women in the executive boards of companies within the EU. But where and when does gender matter most?

In one of the workshops at *Gender in the Media*, we looked at men and women and what is commonly associated with or expected from them at different stages in life. When does the issue of gender become a relevant factor for someone's life? Is the question of age an issue of greater import for men or women? Does age matter at all when it comes to gender issues?

Consider the 'average' lives of Maria and Stefan to try and answer

the above questions: Maria and Stefan are fictional characters, and any association with real persons is coincidental, their characters having been created to serve only as illustrations. While cultural backgrounds can greatly affect the perception of gender and gender-relations, for the purpose of this exercise we will try to create an 'average' European pattern.

Maria and Stefan serve as examples, and as an interesting reflec-

tion of today's European society; some assumptions are made in order to try to reproduce the average idea, but from the desire to avoid stereotyping, the characters are given their own personalities which may occasionally conflict with the expected 'norm'. Below are a series of possible interpretations of the lives of the two and what they tell us. Maria and Stefan both come from the middle-class, and are assumed to have gone to school and university.

It is rather easy to make the assumption that the majority of young girls grow up playing with dolls or toy versions of kitchen appliance and throwing imaginary tea parties for their stuffed animals, while young boys enjoy imagining themselves as superheroes, playing with action figures, watching cartoons that in-

clude violent scenes and playing with remote-controlled cars.

The obvious question is this; why are girls more inclined to play with dolls and boys more inclined to play with cars and building blocks? While some continue to argue for a predisposition towards interests according to gender, more and more people believe that this is an artificial construct created by society and the education system, and so they challenge the 'traditional' association of 'science toys' with boys and 'domestic toys' with girls. Shops and advertisements have reacted as a result, and today it is possible to find shops which group toys by interest rather than gender; the aforementioned mock-kitchen appliances are now often available in many different colours, with both boys and girls on the packaging.

The teenage years are filled with confusion and identity questions for both genders; while girls tend to physically develop much faster and invest more interest in their appearance, boys often start to develop a couple of years later but explore their sexuality to a greater extent. Stereotypes and media coverage tend to present teens as either singularly praiseworthy achievers in such areas as school work, or as extreme cases of substance abuse.

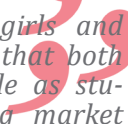
As young adults, Maria and Stefan both go on to university and get the chance to develop themselves and gain more independence. A great deal is expected of this period; to be active, innovative and responsible, although at the same time they are significantly overlooked when discussing 'hard' topics in the public sphere or media, often because they are

deemed to be too inexperienced or naïve to hold valid opinions.

There are, however, examples that point towards a shift in this attitude, such as initiatives from governments or intergovernmental organisations (the EU or Council of Europe) to include youth (through student and/or youth organisations) directly in the decision-making process. Despite these initiatives, however, youth influence remains at a very limited level.

After these formative years, significant differences between the genders become more obvious in society; while in school, girls and boys are equal in that both fulfil the same role as students, the working market does not provide these same or equal roles. Many more men than women currently occupy

decision-making positions, and studies show that in all countries men are paid more than a woman in the same or a similar post.




While in school, girls and boys are equal in that both fulfil the same role as students, the working market does not provide these same or equal roles

Despite her higher-education degree, Maria ends up in a middle-management position which will not change significantly throughout her career, while Stefan starts out working for an IT company and continues to found his own and so to achieve greater success in his later years. The two exhibit a rather stereotypical but common reflection of reality – the powerful and entrepreneurial attributes associated with the male, contrasted with the comparatively disadvantaged woman.

The working environment also reflects upon family life; less competitive jobs and fewer working hours allow women like Maria to spend more time at home and with their children, while men are expected to focus more on their career, to the detriment of their own family life. There are, however, the rare cases of women who choose to pursue a career rather than a strong family life, or men who would rather focus on the home than their work.

Gender roles in the family have shown a tendency to change in recent years as well, and if one considers media portrayals and recent labour laws, it is already possible to see men taking parental leave from their work and being portrayed as the loving father in advertisements for household products.



Gender roles in the family have shown a tendency to change in the last years

Towards retirement age, both men and women seem to retreat to a space somehow outside of society, to what is perceived as the inactive part of the population, living off a pension or preparing for retirement. Grandparenthood is the most common association with 'elderly' status, and grandmothers are always superb cooks, while grandfathers tell stories from their youth while teaching their grandchildren how to fish or take apart a computer (something which only Stefan would do).

There is a lot of lost potential within this age group, as these people who have both the time to be involved in something

other than work, as well as the experience and education of a lifetime, should be more actively involved in society. It has, however, become a trend that elderly women sometimes to take on entrepreneurial roles in micro-businesses, such as the creation and selling of home-made goods, be it jewellery, pottery or home-decoration items.

However, the great potential of this age group is certainly far from being reached. What is interesting as well is that it seems that the gap between genders seems to decrease, as both genders become identified with their familial role, independent of previous life experience. Outside of the familial circle, however, is the public sphere of politics, where men over the age of 55 dominate the scene in most European countries, while wom-

en, under-represented in politics in general, tend to become invisible on the public scene after a certain age, especially in positions of power. The examples of Margaret Thatcher and Angela Merkel, who have been or still are the most powerful people in their respective countries at one point, are still an exception.

While the word 'age' may have no gender in English as a language, and it may have one gender or another in some languages, the important issue remains that the biggest gender gap between men and women appears after the end of the formative years, in the labour market and in family life.

There is the occasional change in perspective in some cases, but these are singular moments that should serve as examples for a

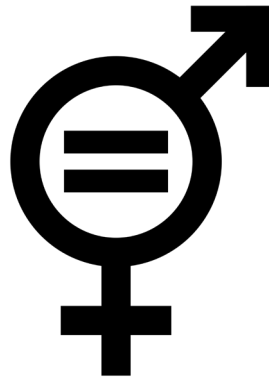
more inclusive future. While the differences between genders are most consequential in the mentioned age group, it is important to remember the effect that education (be it formal or informal) has on children, and the way they will eventually choose to lead their lives, consciously or unconsciously. This being said, it is important not to fall within extremes, as gender equality does not constitute the dissolution of gender altogether. ●

Nurturing feminism

By Anna Saraste

Welcome to Sarajevo, the cradle of religious and ethnic diversity. Who knows, maybe one day this could even be a prominent meeting point for not only music and language, good food and beer, but also people of different sexual orientations and identities? As of today, however, the laws on gender equality still require proper implementation.

I had never realised before coming to the European Youth Press' *Gender in the Media* study session that, over the years, I had nurtured in me a small but very firm



feminist. For this, I can mainly thank my Scandinavian cultural background and the deeply rooted perception of established human rights and gender equality in almost all areas of my home society. However, things which I take for granted do not exist in Bosnia and

Herzegovina or Macedonia, for instance, and the clash between the radically differing backgrounds of the participants was touched on in numerous discussions and panels during the week. While, for me, gender sensitivity seemed to refer to adoption rights for gay couples or even the right of disabled people to have children, those in certain Balkan countries face a battle to even obtain a comment from the only female politician of some parliamentary group or other - often unsuccessfully. Not only women, but also sexual minorities and marginalised people are under-, or misrepresented, almost everywhere.

Over the years, I had nurtured in me a small but very firm feminist



For me, the different contexts matter in a positive way. They inspire us to widen our own perspective and encourage us, the young media-makers, to address gender issues more consciously, and to have our reporting come out of the closet. ●



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Organisers



European Youth Press (EYP) – www.youthpress.org

The European Youth Press (EYP) is an umbrella association of young journalists in Europe which involves more than 50,000 journalists aged 30 or younger. As a European network of young media-makers, EYP has 25 members, including organisations ranging from Sweden to Malta and from Germany to Russia. These are either national organisations for young journalists, or international youth media, such as Europe & Me (based in Germany), Wave Magazine (Serbia), Chips (Belgium) or Journal Europa (France). EYP has also developed a network of young multipliers in the countries where it does not have a member organisation yet, such as Finland, Norway, Estonia and Lithuania.

EYP has organised numerous events for young journalists, which promote the role of youth media while also facilitating discussions about journalistic education standards and media policies throughout the European Union. EYP sees itself as serving national structures through the development and coordination of projects organised by young media makers in Europe, and provides contact forums and educational seminars for multipliers of the member associations. Above all, the aim of all member associations and of EYP is to inspire young people to become involved in the media and to take an active part in civil society by fostering objective and independent journalism.

Youth Press Association of Bosnia and Herzegovina (ONABIH) -
Omladinska novinska asocijacija u Bosni i Hercegovini - www.onabih.ba

ONABIH is a youth NGO dedicated to journalism which was founded in December 2007 by a group of young people, the aim of which is to increase youth participation in the media. Today, ONABIH is known as a multi-ethnic organisation, trained to provide young people with the opportunity to become familiar with media, to learn more about journalism and to participate in creating their own media space. ONABIH is also a member organisation of the European Youth Press (EYP).

ONABIH's primary goal is to contribute to youth participation in society by giving them a chance to learn something new, either in the field of journalism itself (by participating in educational seminars and training), or through research related to their own journalistic practice. These activities are intended to provide them with a space where they can express their own opinions, or share their experiences with their peers.

Since 2008, ONABIH has organised several projects which have attracted a large number of participants. 'Peer to Peer', 'Radio-journalism' and 'Photo-journalism ONABIH Kamp 2010' aimed to foster the participants' theoretical knowledge of journalism in general. In addition, Karike, ONABIH's magazine, has members spread throughout the entire country.

Funders



European Youth Foundation (EYF) - <http://www.eyf.coe.int/fej/>

EYF is a fund which was established in 1972 by the Council of Europe to provide financial support for European youth activities. It has an annual budget of approximately 3 million Euro. Since 1972, more than 300,000 young people, aged between 15 and 30 and mostly from member states, have benefited directly from EYF-supported activities. In 2007, the EYF supported some 300 projects involving more than 15,000 young people. Its purpose is to encourage co-operation among young people in Europe by providing financial support to European youth activities which promote peace, understanding, co-operation and a spirit of respect for the Council of Europe's fundamental values such as human rights, democracy, tolerance and solidarity.

International Planned Parenthood Foundation (IPPF) (<http://ippf.org>)

The IPPF started as a voluntary activity in the early 1950s, when a group of men and women started to campaign for women's rights and the ability to control their own fertility. Today, it has 152 member associations, works in 172 countries and runs 65,000 service points worldwide. IPPF aims to improve the quality of life of individuals by providing and campaigning for sexual and reproductive health and rights through advocacy and services. The Federation defends the right of all people to enjoy sexual lives free from ill health, unwanted pregnancy, violence and discrimination.



List of contributors

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Sanja Jankovic ● Eliana De Leo ● Ekaterina Kuznetsova ● Olimpia Parje ● Anna Saraste ● Izabelle Devulder ● Musa Mylko ● Gulsen Devre ● Jonas Tylewski ● Katarzyna Morton ● Sebastian Olenyi ● Simone d'Angelo ● Fabian Demicoli ● Léa Cotart-Blanco ● Maria Wölfle ● Rebecca Bengtsson ● Milena Stosic ● Goran Igi'c ● Karen de Bruyn ● Lisa Zeller ● Elia Blülle ● Claudia Köver ● Catalina Dumbraveanu ● Jesper Bergman ● Marius Ulozas ● Dennis Hadzic ● Haris Dedovic ● Mihaela Georgescu ● Carmen Paun ● Mark Rendiero



About this booklet

How can a journalist avoid reinforcing gender stereotypes when producing media? This was the main aim of the *Gender in the Media* training course organised by European Youth Press and Youth Press Association of Bosnia-Herzegovina in May 2013.

This booklet compiles the results of the *Gender in the Media* training course, divided into two areas; media production and guideline development. The participants of the training course were free to choose their focus area, and developed journalistic guidelines for recognition and avoidance of stereotypes in the media, as well as media products by including input from participants, speakers and trainers, which were collected by our team.

The guidelines aim to provide the input acquired through the training sessions by building best practices. The media products include stories that were based on a study visit to the centre 'Women Victims of War' and opinion articles.

In this booklet, you also find the articles written by the participants that will serve as good practice examples on how the guidelines can be implemented into journalistic work.