

# Jačanje sistema socijalne zaštite i inkluzije djece u BiH



## Media and social protection and inclusion of children (April 2009 – March 2010)

### Annual media analysis summary report and recommendations

Media Initiatives and Media Plan Institute carried out **an analysis of press and electronic media contents** dealing with a wide range of topics related to child oriented social policy, which were recorded during the press clipping activity conducted by the Media Plan Institute from 1<sup>st</sup> April until 14<sup>th</sup> March 2010.

- 13 dailies, 10 weekly and periodical magazines and 10 TV stations' central news programs were monitored.

- The dailies published 4 563 texts dealing with child related issues. The largest number of such texts was published by: Dnevni list, a Mostar based daily – 638 or 1.8 per edition; Glas Srpske, a daily from Banja Luka – 609; Nezavisne Novine daily, also from Banja Luka; and a Sarajevo daily Dnevni avaz, the largest circulated daily in BiH. Given the fact that Dnevni avaz is the daily with the largest number of all kinds of information published (including ads, obituaries and other non journalist forms) it turns out that the issues that have been monitored are not exactly among the top priorities of the daily. Vecernje novosti, a Belgrade-based newspaper that has its BiH edition reported on child-related issues at least 64 times. The data is of particular significance because of the fact that two other dailies that have been monitored – EuroBlic and Vecernji list – had much more of such contents in spite of the fact that half of their texts is related to Serbia and Croatia where their domicile editions come from.

- When the issue is about weekly, that is, bi-weekly magazines, is evident that the Banja Luka based **Novi reporter** has the largest number of texts dealing with children and their rights. The fact that the first ranking newspaper has less than one text per edition on average (0,64) and the majority of the second ranking ones publish child related texts in every third edition, shows that this topic is not the primary interest of the weekly magazines.

- Unlike the printing media where the entire content was monitored, in case of TV stations only the central news programs were subject to monitoring. The issue is, at least when the public broadcasting services are in question, about the most viewed programs that encompass the majority of the most important developments in the country and abroad, that is, the target area covered by the given station. **The largest number of contents was observed in the Sarajevo canton television (TVSA) – 167.** The issue is about the TV house that covers local affairs primarily with a deflection from high politics thus obtaining the room for social issues and developments.

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- When it comes to dailies, **the majority of texts referred to education of children** – 1583 or 33% of the total of published texts about children. This thematic leadership was expected because school is a frequent synonym for children. And it is exactly the school, and the primary school first of all, that the largest number of texts of this category is linked to. Those were news of some longer journalist forms speaking about enrolment of first graders, problems related to free textbooks, that is, returning of textbooks in Federation of BiH, severe material conditions in some schools, in particular in schools of Republika Srpska, but also a series of affirmative texts about successful results achieved by individual schools and their students. A portion of texts is related to preschool education system. In this category included were certain texts that went outside of education institutions' frameworks and were related to some relevant politicians' statements pertaining to education system reform process, the issue of the so-called "two schools under one roof", clarification of the situation regarding textbook policy, teachers' strike and financial allocations to some schools in need. The category "other" takes the second position (16%). Those are various events hard to be categorized into one of the topics defined. The topic of *children's health* (13%) follows. The issue is about a whole set of events treating the primary health care of children, treatment of children suffering from leukemia and other severe diseases, problems related to medical insurance of children, sanitation and hygiene in schools, appearance of the new type of flu and the shortage of vaccines, that is, delays in immunization process. The categories such as *children with special needs, children without parental care, child abuse, development of children, social welfare allowances and participation of children in decision-making processes* were represented below 10%, proportionately to the sequencing order.

- when the issue is about magazines the leading position is taken by *other* – 22% and is followed by *education* – 20%. Therefore, education is less present in weeklies and periodicals. The topics of *children without parental care* and *development of children* also have two-digit percentages which indicates that these magazines treat these topics to a considerable extent and not at the level of daily affairs but rather at the level of problem elaboration and are more tackling the topics where it is insisted on expert opinion or on broader elaboration of the theme.

Topics of education and children's health are represented more than 50% in news programs broadcast by TV stations. The category of *other* takes the third place and, in addition to these three, the topic of child abuse also has the two-digit percentage. In general, a conclusion can be drawn that televisions are oriented toward the so-called concrete developments for which they can ensure images, such as filming in various schools and hospitals or stories about concrete problems. Therefore, it is not surprising that the very broad and a somewhat abstract theme of development of children and especially their participation in decision-making has not been treated in these programs at all.

When we take a look at the *institutional activity*, a variable that implies naming which organization, company or institution is involved in finding solutions to the problem or is particularly responsible for that event all media position the category of **government and public institutions' activities** at first place. In case of dailies and television houses this is a very high percentage (68 and 69) whereas when it comes to magazines is it somewhat lower and amounts to 48%. The following category is the one of *non-governmental organizations' activities* with 15% in all three types of media. The huge advantage of the first-positioned category comes from the fact that it includes judiciary which is prosecuting both children and juveniles and their parents and persons abusing them; public health

institutes dealing with immunization and other forms of health care; hospitals and other medical institutions; homes for children; various municipality services; heads of services or departments who pay visits or provide donations to institutions dealing with children; schools and kindergartens (not private ones of course); and, certainly, various line ministries at different levels. Quite often, at least when the issue is about the authorities, the whole series of texts was indicating to the **lack** of activity regarding the problem. However, that too is the activity relevant for the content of the text.

- The activities referring to **UNICEF** are represented in dailies with 3 percents, in TV programs with 4%, whereas in magazines the percentage is quite high and amounts to 13. Most frequently the issue is about immunization or, as the case was in a couple of articles, reduction of poverty or respect for children's rights. Activities related to proclaiming the best BiH football player Edin Dzeko for the Good Will Ambassador of UNICEF received considerable attention and were well-received as were some joint activities regarding the *development of children* that were carried out in cooperation with commercial sponsors. The high representation of UNICEF in the magazines' contents could be explained to some extent by the fact that weeklies had fewer texts but were relatively often covering the activities of UNICEF, which in a way is an acknowledgement for the very activities that drew attention.

- 52% of texts published by the dailies and no less that 71% of contents published by central news programs on TV stations **were presented in form of reports**. This is the most frequent variant of information media reporting in dailies and TV central current affairs programs. Therefore the child-related topics were not avoided by that professional journalist standard. The second position is taken by news (44% in dailies; 34% in magazines; and just 21% in TV stations' programs). We have to point out that the TV reports were more creative, that is, more visual than the print media reports, which in fact is the characteristic of television. However, due to the fact that every second of the TV central news program "costs a million" such reports were quite simplified. It was only in newspapers that we were able to get more details about an event or a process. Anyway, this is a textbook example of media functioning – a TV station provides brief information and draws attention to something and all those interested in more detail could find them in newspapers.

- When it comes to magazines, it is a little bit surprising situation that here too a piece of news is present as a form, which is not a characteristic of weeklies and bi-weeklies. In relation to dailies, representation of the form of "other" is higher in terms of percentages, implying most frequently the investigative texts or reportages describing some interesting or complex life situations of children.

- The majority of texts or TV programs about children are the **product of media journalists** (68% dailies; 51% magazines; 78% TV). **The second place is taken by unsigned texts** (dailies and TV nearly 20% and magazines not less than 42%), which is unacceptable from the point of view of the theoretical journalistic foundations because it is a common fact that readers and viewers have more respect for texts that are backed up by an author, agency or institution. The reason behind such a large number of unsigned texts is that media to not point out that the issue is about a press release coming from an institution, organization or agency, making them clear sources of information.

- It is almost a devastating data that **not less 77% and 72% of texts published by dailies and magazines respectively name one source only**. If we take into consideration the fact that when the issue is about news and press releases as shorter forms they most frequently have one source only,

the data that reports and reportages are present in newspapers with more than 50% indicates that these forms too are often based on one source. Unacceptable! Although the issue is not about political themes that may generate numerous controversies entailing large consequences, we believe that children-related topics such as education, health care or social welfare, is extremely important for social relations in BiH as this is the foundation of any country. Treating such a topic requires taking an insight into it from various aspects, both professional and human.

- There is a little bit different situation when it comes to **TV stations**. In spite of the fact that majority of their reports also have one source only (32%), **two thirds of contents have more than one**. As the issue is about reporting of their own field journalists and the form that insists on audiovisual inputs it is understandable that the field team would contact a number of people. TV Sarajevo should in particular be proud of its numbers of sources as this is the TV station with higher percentage of reports with two and three sources.

- The majority of texts in **newspapers have positive content (47 and 50%) while the situation is opposite when it comes to TV stations as they have 45% of negative contents**. This is one of the results deriving from the situation in the country with numerous economic problems that generate delinquency and impede sound health and education systems. However, in relation to a research activity carried out earlier on by the Media Plan Institute, when the total content of newspapers had almost 70% of reports with negative content the children-related topic is not that "black". This is of course supported by a whole series of texts speaking about different individual successful achievements of children, diverse festivals, manifestations and humanitarian activities providing concrete results.

- Unlike the contents, where a part of media are dominated by the *negative*, **when it comes to journalists' inclination then the neutral has the evident domination**. From the point of view of journalists' professionalism, the aim is to have neutral, or as some call it, objective texts/reports. However, the fact is that the engaged, committed journalism has the inclination and but is not always an unprofessional approach. Things should be observed in the wider societal context. If all arguments were used, as well as the richness of the available facts, then the inclination is a totally legitimate thing. Comment, as a journalistic form, is in particular legitimate journalistic form for presenting a stance, that is, journalistic inclination toward an event. It is interesting that there is a large number of TV stations' contents where the journalistic inclination is evident in relation to dailies where neutral stance is almost dominant. There are two reasons for that. The first is that on our TV stations we were quite often able to see engaged reports insisting on assistance to children, and the other is that FTV and to somewhat smaller extent TV Hayat had programs with negative stance toward both politicians and some institutions whose behavior, according to them, does not correspond with norms of respect for the rights of the child. The issue is, of course, about percentage-related proportions rather than actual number of articles (frequency) where thousands of texts were recorded in dailies. Magazines, which by the way have more room for detailed elaboration of topics, had a somewhat larger number of texts with journalistic inclination.

- The majority of inputs about children is **based on daily developments** through very simplified and sometimes even protocol information. In the essence, the children-related themes were best treated through part of reportages in weeklies and sometimes in dailies where journalists were focused primarily on a certain problem in direct connection with children. Therefore, more elaborate

forms such as reportages, extensive reports with a number of sources, and interviews provide better problem perception and deeper understanding.

- **Generally speaking, there were no major or strikingly evident forms of unprofessionalism.** However, the following trends were observed:

\* Some topics included **strong political attitudes** which are the reflection of social reality in BiH. For example, it was possible to notice from time to time that in Bosniac majority areas Croats, that is, their political parties, were blamed for the situation regarding the divided schools in the Federation of BiH, without contacting the other side and comprehensive insight into the problem. On a couple of occasions too, Mostar-based newspapers reported on certain events placing the focus on Croatian side only. Federal TV had several reports including strong attitude in blaming public and religious institutions for jeopardizing children's rights. The opposition magazine Dani also had some "political stingers" sent towards government institutions and individuals due to problems prevailing in education system of the state and Federation of BiH.

\* By comparing the same topics in different media it was possible to notice **manipulative coding** of certain texts both in newspapers and on TV, that is, making selection of information thus leading to confusion in readers, that is, viewers.

\* Some data, that is, statements of interlocutors **were taken for granted** resulting in publishing or broadcasting sometimes shocking information that had to be double checked. This is connected to a large extent to the problem of naming one source of information only.

\* There was one case of inadequate usage of a little Roma girl begging in the streets. On two occasions the ethnic background of a perpetrator was pointed out unnecessarily. But in general, both this one and all other examples mentioned earlier on have been rare in the course of the one-year monitoring period.